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MINUTES OF THE

Christian Convention,

HELD AT

Aurora, Illinois,

OCTOBER 31st. AND NOVEMBER 1st. 1867.

SECOND EDITION REVISED,

CONTAINING THE PROCEEDINGS AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE CONVENTION.

THE ADDRESSES OF

Rev. Messrs. HART and BLANCHARD.

WITH THE ADDITION OF

A SERMON ON FREE MASONRY,

By Rev. C. G. FINNEY, late President of Oberlin College.

PRICE. Single Copies 25 cts. 5 Copies $1

Sent by Mail on Receipt of Price.

Address

Rev I. A. HART,

Wheaton Illinois.

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The Proceedings & Resolutions of the Convention,

The Addresses

Of Rev. Messrs. Hart and Blanchard,

With copious extracts from congratulatory letters,

WITH THE ADDITION OF A SERMON ON FREEMASONRY BY REV. CHARLES G. FINNEY, OF OBERLIN.

"In secret have I said nothing."—Jesus Christ.

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ADVERTISEMENT TO THE SECOND EDITION.

This second edition of the Aurora minutes is issued because the demand for it has exhausted the first edition of 3,000 in an almost incredibly short space of time. And still orders pour in for more. The work has been revised, condensed and abridged in order greatly to enhance its value by making room for the masterly sermon of Rev. C. G. Finney, delivered to his church in Oberlin, a short time before the Convention and prepared for publication by himself. It is believed that those who may miss the portions of the first edition which have been left out to make room for this sermon, will be more than satisfied with the exchange; and also that the use of larger type, a greater number of pages and a better quality of paper will more than reconcile them to a slight increase in the price. Our object is a more thorough discussion of the subject and a more general diffusion of unanswerable arguments. We ask the friends of free discussion, who believe in being of the day and not of the night nor of darkness, to aid us in the circulation of this book by sending in their orders for themselves and for their friends and neighbors. Above all things let prayer be made without ceasing to God through Christ, that this diffusion of truth may be made effectual through the accompanying power of the Holy Spirit.

COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

The Christian Convention at Aurora was the result of a deep conviction that the evil of organized secrecy has reached such dimensions that longer silence and inaction cannot be innocently maintained. It was seen that the dark floods of secret influence were not only overflowing the plains, but were covering the hills and reaching the mountains; not only filling the world, but pouring into the church; not only infecting the youth, but grave ministers were being carried away with the dissimulation. While the press and the pulpit were, as a general rule, observing as studied a silence on the subject as might be expected if they were subsidized or struck dumb with terror. Organized Deism was seen in open day laying the corner stones of Christian churches. Perplexed and distressed by this state of things, a few like-minded Christians determined to invite a convention for prayer and consultation. They regarded it merely as a local movement, not expecting members from more than a few counties at most. A portion of the religious press showed great

reluctance to publishing the call. Others, however, secular as well as religious, gave it unsolicited insertion and commendation. And when the convention assembled, to the surprise of those who had called it, earnest men were found there from Ohio, from Michigan, from Indiana, from Iowa and Nebraska, as well as from Illinois.

There were Episcopal Methodists and Protestant Methodists, Free Methodists, Wesleyans, Baptists and Free Will Baptists, United Brethren, German Lutherans, Congregationalists and Presbyterians, all speaking the same things. Eighty-seven members enrolled their names, and letters of congratulation poured in from Wisconsin to Mason and Dixon's line, and from Rhode Island to Washington Territory. We were thrilled and awed. We were evidently in the focus of that light which shineth from one end of heaven to the other. The spirit which brooded over the chaos at creation was evidently moving on the deep of mind, was lifting up the standard promised "when the enemy cometh in like a flood." We were reassured that there were reserved at least "seven thousand men that have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal." We gathered what we could of the light which shone around us, and the result is the work before you. We ask for it a candid and prayerful reading.

COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.

MINUTES.

Persuant to the following call, a convention met at the City Hall in Aurora, and was called to order by Benj. Hackney, Esq.

"In compliance with the expressed wish of persons of different denominations, the undersigned respectfully request such of their fellow Christians as may choose to do so to meet them in convention on Thursday, Oct. 31st, at 3 o'clock, P. M., at the City Hall in the city of Aurora, Ill., for prayer and consultation on the following topics: 1. The relation of prevalent Secret Orders to the Christian religion. 2. The duty of professing Christians in reference to them. 3. The propriety of calling a National Convention on the subject."

Signed Joseph Travis, Royal Arch Mason, I. A. Hart, a seceding Mason of 1828, E. P. Hart, Master Mason, C. L. Stow, J. Blanchard, David West, D. W. Stockwell, B. Hackney, Philo Carpenter, T. G. Damon, M. M. Miles, Seth Griffiths, W. Tyler, J. Denny, O. Dewey, Edward Ebbs, S. McCarty, Charles Gill, Newton Otis, S. Towne, B. West, E. Denny, N. D. Fanning, J. G. Terrill, C. H. Underwood, W. Stannard, Master Mason, Lewis Bailey, L. Bishop, G. H. Fox, Joseph Catterlin, Isaac Preston.

In view of the fact that the word "christian" admits of various significations the Committee of Arrangements passed the following resolution and caused it to be published with the call, viz:

That the Convention be composed of the various evangelical denominations.

A temporary organization was effected by calling Rev. N. D. Fanning, of Elgin, to the chair, and appointing Rev. C. H. Underwood, of Freeport, and Joseph Denny, Esq., of Aurora, clerks. After which, the Convention spent a season of earnest prayer for the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The Convention was permanently organized by the choice of Rev. J. Blanchard, of Wheaton College, President, Philo Carpenter, Esq., and Rev. R. Loggan, Vice Presidents, Rev. N. D. Fanning, Sec'y, and Rev. J. P. Richards and Joseph Denny, Assistants.

The Convention held five sessions with deep and increasing interest. A spirit of fervent prayer seemed to pervade the assembly and much time was spent in this exercise.

A large number of congratulatory letters were received and read in whole or in part, specimens of which will be found in this work.

Able addresses were delivered by Rev. I. A. Hart, Rev. Milton Smith, Rev. Joseph Travis, Rev. James I. Baber, Isaac Preston, Esq., Rev. Geo. Clark, Rev. J. Blanchard and others.

The following resolutions were discussed and adopted:

WHEREAS Christianity in its origin is an emanation from Christ, in its experiences is a union with Christ, and admits of no rival in the hearts of His subjects, and,

WHEREAS Masonry, with its kindred systems, neither emanates from Christ, nor consists in union with Him, but adheres to rites and ceremonies not deducible from the Word of God, and imposes obligations upon men's consciences often inconsistent with that Word, therefore,

Resolved, That it and they sustain a relation of rivalship to our common christianity, and are therefore anti-christian.

Resolved, That we believe our duty to be plain, viz: first, to religiously abstain from any affiliation with these societies; secondly, to calmly, truthfully and lovingly expose their unchristian character, and thirdly, by all legitimate means to oppose their progress and influence amongst us.

The Convention came to the conclusion that it was expedient to publish their minutes and

discussions, as far as practable and also that a National Convention be called upon the subject. To carry out these objects the following committees were appointed with plenary powers.

Publishing Committee—Rev. I. A. Hart, Rev. J. Blanchard, Prof. O. F. Lumry, L. W. Mills, Esq., of Wheaton, Ill., Rev. N. D. Fanning, of Elgin.

National Executive Committee—Pres. J. Blanchard, of Wheaton, Ill., Prof. H. Fairchild, of Oberlin, O., Rev. B. F. Roberts, of Rochester, N. Y., Rev. John Lawrence, Nashville, Tenn., Rev. A. Crooks, Syracuse, N. Y., Rev. A. C. Van Roalte, Holland, Mich., Rev. Nathan Brown, New York City, Rev. Mr. Livingston, Wis., T. P. Stevenson, Editor Christian Statesman, Philadelphia, Rev. De Los Love, Milwaukee, Wis.

The following resolutions were adopted:

Whereas our republican institutions were dictated and sustained by a free discussion and ample elucidation of their foundation principles, and resort has never been had to secret combinations of any character for their maintainance, and

Whereas the same is true of all the teachings and works of Christ respecting His kingdom, as also of the apostles and martyrs, and the whole church of God in its reformatory movements; and,

WHEREAS permanent social secrecy is the invariable badge of all associated evil doers, and we are commanded to shun the very appearance of evil; and,

WHEREAS the history of secret temperance orders for the last twenty years plainly demonstrates that organizations operating secretly for good objects are easy stepping-stones to the more mystic and dangerous orders; therefore, as the earnest friends of the temperance reformation, we ask for it an open field and free discussion believing that it is impossible to reform men by ceremonial obligations, but alone by the creation of a right feeling and principle, through the truth, untrammeled by rites and ceremonies and unimpeded by the suspicion which always follows secrecy; we therefore deem it unwise and unsafe to affiliate with or in any way to countenance such secret organizations.

Resolved, That the thanks of the Convention be tendered to the various papers that have published the call for this Convention, hoping for like courtesy on future occasions from the newspaper press generally.

Resolved, That the thanks of the Convention be tendered to the citizens of Aurora for their hospitality to the members, and to the City Council for the use of their hall.

Resolved, That the removal and overthrow of the secret orders be made a subject of

special prayer on the first Sabbath evening of each month, wherever practicable, and thanks be given to God on the next day of public thanksgiving, for the auspicious inauguration of this movement.

The hour being late, the Convention adjourned sine die, with singing the Doxology in Old Hundred.

J. BLANCHARD, President.

N. D. FANNING, Secretary.

SPEECH OF REV. I. A. HART.

MR. PRESIDENT AND BRETHREN:

When, to avoid confession of crime a man commits suicide, that suicide is the strongest kind of a confession. So, when men murder a man for disclosing their secrets, by that act they confess and declare that he has actually and truly disclosed their secrets, more strongly than they could do it by words or affidavits. Masons have said to me, when I have confessed to the truth of Morgan's and Bernard's revelations, "You are a perjured man." The haste and holy horror with which the last speaker fled from this house upon the call for a speech from a seceding Mason, was plainly meant to convey the same impression. Well, if I am a perjured man, it is because I have violated my oath by disclosing Masonic se-

crets. I have disclosed no such secrets unless Bernard's book is true. The Mason who says I am perjured says, thereby, that the book is true. For on no other supposition can my attestation of it amount to perjury. And if I am perjured, he is perjured, and by the same act—the attestation of Morgan's book. And his attestation is even stronger and less to be suspected than mine; because it is an unintentional and unwilling attestation. Yes, I love to have Masons talk about seceding Masons being perjured. A smart and wiley Mason never does that. He says, "According to your own account of the matter you are perjured, and therefore are not fit to be believed." That's shrewd. During the war detectives went and joined the K. G. Cs. for the express purpose of disclosing their secrets and thus defeating and breaking them up. What patriot says they are perjured, or not fit to be believed? And if paramount duty to country justified these detectives in treating the oaths they took in these dark conclaves as a nullity, a promise honored only in the breach of it, how much more would they be justified in violating those oaths, if they had gone into them in good faith, lured and wheedled in by goodly professions of loyalty and solemn assurances that the order was pure in its principles and objects, in perfect harmony with their duty to God and their country?

Not fit to be believed? Who were the old seceding Masons? They were counted by thousands. They were men than whom among the Masonic fraternity certainly there were none in better repute up to the day of their seceding. Their entire testimony is a harmonious unity. They agree perfectly. There was not, and is not to-day, a man in all the land, whom his neighbors would believe under oath, that dares to utter a straight forward contradiction to their testimony. Not fit to be believed? And yet the valorous legions of Masonry, were, to a man, silenced in their presence and fled in dismay before their testimony; forsook their lodges and did not return to them for about the space of twenty years, and very few of the old Masons even then. If false witness against Masonry had such power, what would the truth have done?

But now, after forty years, we find these routed legions again in the field. What seemed a dead carcass is again raised to life. It even boasts more largely than ever, and its vain boasting is deluding a generation which knew not Morgan. The greater part of the original seceders sleep with the fathers; and although no well informed and truthful man dares squarely contradict their testimony or impeach their characters, yet great efforts are made, by indirection and inuendoes, by

cunningly framed questions, by special pleading and quibbling, and double entendres, to make the impression that their testimony was false, and still more to bury them out of mind or push them into insignificance or forgetfullness, by the imposing grandeur of the living orders. It seems, therefore, both appropriate and necessary to recall that testimony, and that the few who survive should repeat it to an age who have come upon the stage of life since these things were transacted. I may be told that it will be useless: that Freemasonry has now reached such a magnitude, and has so entrenched itself that it can hurl defiance at all its enemies and treat the assaults of such miserable dotards as old seceding Masons with utter contempt and scorn. As to the scorn of Masons or of men, it is a small matter, since even Paul was accounted a fool for the truth's sake, and all true reformers have shared this odium. And if it were not so, "He that is down needs fear no fall." Just reproaches I have no right to complain of, and unjust ones give me no concern, especially if thereby truth may be elicited and good may come to my brethren of mankind. As to the effect of our testimony upon the colossal power of Masonry and other secret orders, that will be not as men pronounce, but as God wills, feeble or mighty. We may seem, in this effort, like one who attempts to

match the north wind with his breath; and yet we may gain this satisfaction, if no more, the consciousness of having done our duty. I therefore, as one standing on the shore of the silent river, take this occasion to renew a preceding Mason's testimony once more, before I make the returnless passage, anxious mainly to do my duty, and leave the results with Him who disposes of our lives and of all things, making great events to spring often from slight causes, and bringing to nought the counsels of the proud. I am not certain that the time has fully come to speak or act with immediate or decisive success against the secret orders of the day. But I do feel as sure as I do of Christ's final triumph, that it will come. It will come. And then, and not till then, let my epitaph be written.

I ask now your indulgence while I state some of the reasons why I renounced Freemasonry, and feel it my duty to testify against it and all analagous institutions. In doing this, let me premise that I do not pretend to be revealing Masonic secrets. That work was done up forty years ago; and yet men reproach and sneer at me as a revealer of secrets, when I only take a universally conceeded liberty, that of freely discussing matters that have become the property of the public by being printed, stereotyped and sent over the land for forty years. Secrets, for-

sooth!! The truth is, Free Masonry has no secrets, and never had any worth knowing. But if their pomps and boasts awaken any one's curiosity, and you cannot resist the suggestion that where there is so much smoke there must be some fire, and you must trace the thing to its source and know what it is that makes all this parade and ado, I testify to you that at a very trifling expense you can learn more in a few hours from books of the secrets and wonders of Freemasonry, and O. F. too, than you can by attending their lodges for years, and retain your purse, your life, and your conscience in your own keeping, instead of committing them to a mysterious and irresponsible tyranny. If a Mason with a dignified sneer asks you if you really suppose you can get any knowledge of what has never been revealed, and never can be revealed, from such debauched and miserable swindlers as Wm. Morgan, or David Bernard, or Jabez Richardson, be you sure that this swagger is all the more a real and certain lie, for being only an implied and acted one. From these books you can know Freemasonry as it was, as certainly as you can know the American Revolution from Marshall's and Ramsey's Histories, or the laws of the United States from the .published journals of Congress, or the Christian religion from the Old and New Testaments. I feel, therefore, at perfect lib-

erty to speak of any or all their "secrets," as they call them, because they are no secrets. Tho' I cannot say I feel safe from those arrows which are shot secretly at the upright, by unhappy men in whom Secretism has engendered a fanaticism which makes them verily think they do no more than right and justice when they kill the traitors of Masonry. Or, failing through fear or policy to assassinate, shoot poisoned words and wreak Masonic vengence on their victim in the words of their own oral lecture: "By pointing him out to the world as an unworthy and vicious vagabond, by opposing his interests, by disarranging his business, by transferring his character after him wherever he may go, by exposing him to the contempt of the whole fraternity and of the world, but of our illustrious order more especially, during his whole natural life."—(L. on M., p. 394.) This is their boasted charity.

But I shall not be hit or hurt by their arrows, unless it be given to the archers from above to hit me; and if God shall so will, I say with John Brown, I may be worth as much to hang as for anything else. I propose, therefore, to speak freely as I find occasion, and to treat all pretended obligation to the contrary as Paul did idols—as nothings in the world—as I would a promise or an oath extorted by fraud or fear not to inform against

marauding bandits nor to warn my friends of their approach or of their designs. The obligation to give warning of approaching and insidious danger is divinely imposed and pre-existing, and therefore paramount to all oaths or promises which man can impose. The attempt to forestall it is as impious as it is futile; and because Freemasonry attempts to do this and commands silence on pain of death, therefore, I denounced it, and while God gives me life and strength, I will denounce it, come what may.

But in general terms I will say, I renounced Masonry because I found it to be in no respect what it professes to be, but to be built upon a foundation of false pretenses. Upon close inspection I became satisfied that however sincere and well-disposed a large part of its members might be, the institution itself, from turret to foundation stone, is a thoroughly false institution. It is a stupendous lie, and the truth is not in it. Their very name is a misnomer. They are not Masons—they are not free. Look at the initiatory ceremonies and general work of the lodge room. These all seemed to me like the creations of evil fairies. First, the candidate is divested of all his clothing, except that he is allowed to have on one slipper, one leg of a pair of drawers, one arm of a shirt, a hangman's rope about his neck, and a bandage over his eyes that effect-

ually prevents his enjoying, or at least seeing the splendor of his costume. Thus neither barefoot nor shod, neither naked nor clothed, in fit array for the gallows, without a penny or a pin, the Masons play that he is a poor blind candidate, journeying from the west to the east in search of light. As in this ludicrous and indecent plight he gropes his way to the door by the aid of a conductor, after a short parley, he is bidden to "enter in the name of the Lord." And then while he marches slowly around the room, come funereal scripture readings and solemn prayers, as if he were in the perils of death; and then amidst the darkness, and the excitement, and the gloom of these ominous allusions to uncertain terrors, enough to unnerve common men, the awful oath is thrust upon him. Then and there he must take it, no matter what it imports or whether he has enough of self-possession left to be morally accountable or not. Then they play that they open the blind eyes, and imitate the Omnipotent in creating light. And then follow the opening of the wondrous mysteries, and what are they? Why, the poor blind candidate sees an open Bible, which perhaps he never saw before. He sees, too, a square and compass, and is told that Masons use these carpenter's tools as a rule of moral rectitude—about as sensible as making a God of wood or stone; and then he is taught (mar-

velous attainment!) where to place his thumb in shaking hands, so as to say thereby "I am a Mason;" moreover a password is given him, and he is greeted a brother Boaz. And then follow some pleasant instructions and practical jokes that would be really amusing if the whole scene did not savor as much of the profanation of things sacred as of puerile amusement. Is there anything of reality or truth in all this? Is the candidate poor? is he blind? is he journeying? Is it praying, to ask the Grand Architect or Grand Master of the Celestial Lodge—to preserve him from dangers which they know to be only the creations of their own fancies? Their fancies are exceedingly fruitful in creations. They play that they are in Jerusalem, working upon Solomon's temple. Some are workmen, some overseers; one is Solomon, one Hiram Abiff. Oh! they are kings and princes, and priests and high priests, and grand commanders and grand sovereign pontiffs. They are worshipful and most worshipful, most excellent and most puissant, and all sorts of nice things. And as they assume the titles of nobility and hierarchy, so they affect their pomps and their array. Is there any truth or reality in all this? Or is it all a show of empty, deceitful vanity? At the best idle creations of fancy, better suited to amuse children than waste the time and dilute the thoughts of men. To

me all seemed heartless and unreal, except, perhaps, the call from labor to refreshments, especially when bar-rooms and saloons were at hand. The refreshments were real, but the effect of them often was to people the brain with fancies still more weird and unreal. And there was one thing more—the payment of dues was real. That "nobody can deny." But the devotion I found there seemed to me to have no sort of relation to true Christian devotion. If anybody can find Christian worship there, they can find what I cannot. And so I came to the conclusion that as childhood was past with me, I had better put away childish things. It would be more profitable for me to work than to play that I work; more edifying to pray, than to play we say prayers. If all their plays were such as might befit the innocence of childhood, I would smile on it and let it pass. But the genius of this institution ever and anon mingles with its pleasantries the irreverent and the malign. They often play murder, and the arrest and punishment of the perpetrators, or the assassination of some betrayer of their secrets, thus familiarizing their members with the idea that the power of life and death belongs to the lodge, and preparing them to sacrifice on this altar of Moloch such victims as Wm. Morgan and many others, who have from time to time been disposed of in the same way. Their regal

and hierarchal titles, their kingly and aristocratic robes, their papal and pagan pomps, might be passed over as peurilities did they not tend powerfully to engender the spirit that sustains the civil and ecclesiastical despotisms of the Old World, and thus work insidiously and dangerously against the simplicity and purity of religious worship for which our fathers fled to the western wilderness, and as insidiously and dangerously against the republican liberty and equality for which they shed their blood. But here I dismiss these shadows, aud come to something more tangible. A more positive and decisive objection to the Order I found in

II. Their Oaths. First, I believe the oath of God to be a sacred instrument for the investigation of matters that concern men's highest and dearest rights; an instrument appropriated to the State and the Church. When employed by the proper functionaries, and for the proper objects, "the oath is holy and an end of strife." But for private persons or ordinary voluntary associations to employ it for personal and private ends, is to usurp and profane it. It is to violate the Savior's command, "Swear not at all." These private or extra-judicial oaths are condemned by the soundest jurists. Some of the States have positive enactments against them. The Odd Fellows claim that even they are inno-

cent of this wrong, though I think they have used only a formal evasion while they retain the substance of an oath—an indirect appeal to God and the terrors of death. The secret temperance orders all disclaim the use of oaths, and thus admit that this objection to Freemasonry is well taken. But if extra-judicial oaths were allowable, that would be very far from excusing Masonic oaths. Their peculiarities would fix the seal of their condemnation.

(*a*) Thou shalt not forswear thyself, is God's command. The Masonic oath is nothing but a forswearing of one's self in every instance. As I understand this matter, a man who takes an oath forswears himself, unless he knows, beforehand or at the time, what he swears to do, and knows both the practicability and lawfulness of the doing, and at the proper time does it. "Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths." But that these conditions should be fulfilled in the Masonic oath is an utter impossibility, and therefore no man can take it and not forswear himself; *e. g.*, in the first oath he swears to "keep the secrets of Freemasonry which I have received, am about to receive, or may hereafter be instructed in." How could he know whether this oath bound him to conceal lawful secrets, or innocent pleasantries, or mysteries of iniquity? He

could not know, and therefore could not take the oath without forswearing himself in palpable violation of God's command.

(*b*) Swear not at all, is Christ's command in reference to all such swearing: "Neither by Heaven, for it is God's throne; neither by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair black or white." When a man swears under penalty of death, does he not swear by his head? Is it not to violate the command, "Neither shalt thou swear by thy head"? From first to last there is scarcely a Masonic oath in which this is not done. The deponent swears that his life may be taken in every savage and conceivably horrid form, if he proves false. Now then, I affirm that, unless a man has a right to commit suicide he has no right to take such an oath. And unless those who administer the oath have a right to murder the false deponent in form stipulated, they have no right to administer such an oath. It partakes of the guilt of murder either to take, or to administer such an oath. Men shudder when they read of the laws of Draco being written in blood; but a pictorial work on Masonry would present as an appropriate vignette to every oath, throats cut and streaming with gore, bodies severed in twain and the bowels burning to ashes between the parts, limbs torn from the

body, tongues torn out by the roots, eyes dug from their sockets, skulls knocked off and the brains exposed and broiling in the sun.—Whether these would be appropriate emblems of an institution that claims especial eminence in all the elements of love and gentleness, I do not decide; but such were the gentle persuasives which Freemasonry employed to ensure the silence of every one she trusted with her secrects. Their oaths were disgusting, shocking, murderous—that was another reason why I denounced the institution. It did not satisfy me to be told laughingly, as tyros in Masonry will tell you now, that nothing was meant by these bloody imprecations—a mere flourish of rhetorical tragedy, a pretty hard joke, "only this and nothing more." If that were true, it would be an impious profanity. This scattering of fire brands, arrows and death, and saying, "Am I not in sport?" was not my taste. But the history of the Morgan affair settled the Masonic interpretation of their oaths, and demonstrated that they were no mere brutum fulmen, but that Masonry meant to rule its members, if inclined to revolt, by the terrors of horrid assassination—and that in these terrors was the secret of their secrets being kept so closely and so long. There at length the world has the solution of that mystery. Fear has done it. This most ancient, most

honorable, most pure, most mild and most charitable institution carried a concealed dagger, which ever and anon flashed terror into the souls of the wavering, while it carried death to those who dared to speak the truth concerning it, and returned to its covert with such electric quickness that the world never saw it. Murder its members for speaking the truth! Morgan might have told as many lies as he pleased about Masonry, but no sooner does he tell the truth than he must die. Could an institution that frames such deeds by law and oaths have an author or a patron saint less wicked than the Prince of Hell?

(*c*) There are other things in those oaths that to me seemed the footprints of the same infernal patron—*e. g.*, swearing not to defraud or wrong a Mason to the value of one cent, or of anything, "knowing him to be such," nor to insult his female relatives, knowing them to be such. Those clauses always shocked me. I seemed to see old Cloven-foot himself peeping through some crack, and chuckling and ready to split his sides in repressing his laughter, to see how piously he had got these men to license *general fraud and licentiousness*, under pretense of being extra honest with Masons. As if when the Almighty thundered forth his law, "Thou shalt not steal," he had managed to have this

poor hoodwinked and frightened creature answer him to his face, "Lord, I won't steal from a *Mason* if I know him; otherwise I shall do as I please about it." When God says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," the answer is, "Lord, I won't, if all the women will be wives, or daughters, or sisters, or mothers of Masons, and inform me of the fact; otherwise I shall do as I please about it." I remember how this was glossed over at the time, and I have heard the same glossing lately, viz: that a promise or oath to do part of our duty is not a refusal to do the whole. This does not, to my mind, relieve such oaths of a manifestly corrupt implication. When to the question, "will you pay me the hundred dollars you owe me, or give me your note for it?" your debtor answers, I will give you a note for ten dollars—don't you take it as a refusal to pay the ninety dollars? So this Masonic oath is coolly informing the Author of a universal and unconditional law that determines our duty definitely towards all mankind, that we will, upon certain conditions and contingencies, observe that law towards a very small portion of them—a making void the law of God in a way that seems to partake of the insolence of blasphemy.

(*d*) And again, these oaths often bind the the subject, *i. e.*, if they have any validity or

binding force at all—if they were not made void and null by very wickedness—they would bind the subject to do that which is *positively and palpably wicked—e. g.*, "to keep the secrets of a brother or companion Mason as sacredly in my breast as they would be in his own, murder and treason excepted," in the third degree—"murder and treason not excepted," in the seventh. God forbids us to help the wicked by hiding their crimes, and thus screening them from justice. But Masonry swears us to *do* it. The government, in the legitimate use of its God-given prerogatives, swears us to testify the whole truth within our knowledge touching certain crimes. But Masonry foreswears us not to testify, if the culprit be a Mason. Which oath shall be violated? The oath of one's country and of God, or the oath of the lodge? The oath of the government *certainly* is binding. If the Masonic oath is binding, too, then is the Mason's soul brought into a snare wherein he must be inevitably perjured, obey which he may. Into such a dilemma of bondage does the Masonic oath bring its hapless subjects. To keep that oath is to make himself *particeps criminis* in murder or treason, or any other crime, and to stain his soul with the guilt of perjury. And yet the true Mason will be almost sure to prefer the double guilt of screening a criminal from

justice and perjuring his soul, rather than deny the validity of the sinful obligation by which Satan has brought him into bondage. This is not the only case in which the Mason's oath conflicts squarely with right and duty, and binds him, if that were possible, to commit positive sin. He is sworn in some degrees to warn a brother of approaching danger (*e. g.*, a criminal of the approach of the sheriff, rebels in arms of the approach of the loyal forces): "To aid a brother when engaged in *any difficulty*," "to espouse his cause so as to extricate him, if in my power, whether he be right or wrong." If this is not the Devil's bond, I would be willing to give him a *carte blanche* and let him do his worst. "Oh," but says the Mason, "these obligations refer only to worthy brethren, and don't bind us to screen bad men or to help them in any evil." That seems to me a very weak sophism. What has a truly just man to do with having secrets kept for him respecting murder or treason or any other crime? What need has a good man to have you espouse his cause so as to extricate him, whether he be right or wrong? The just have no need of these benefits; they are meant, therefore, for the unjust, and can be meant for no other. The truth is, that in Masonic phrase the worthy Mason is one who keeps his oaths and pays his dues. Then whatever difficulty he gets

into, by whatever crime, his brethren of the mystic tie are bound to stand by him and help him out, if in their power. And if this is not to be in league with the Devil, what is it? And so some of them in the higher degrees are sworn to commit murder, by sacrificing the traitors of Masonry, and in the lower degrees they are taught the same by implication and indirection. But this is so cautiously and artfully put forth that the honest and well disposed in the lodges don't exactly so understand it, and the leaders don't want they should, for fear of revolt among the conscientious portion; therefore we are often told that the men who murdered Morgan were bad Masons, and we must not judge the institution by them—bad or stupid men, who took a joke in earnest and carried it quite too far. And then we are told "the best societies sometimes have bad members—there are bad men in the church, and that's true—good and bad everywhere, and that's true—and it is a blessed thing to be charitable." But charity is not a fool. In the church of Christ the institution is better than the members, but in the lodge the members are better than the institution. And I never could doubt, and can't to-day, that the men who murdered Morgan were more consistent as Masons than those who condemn them. That act of abduction and murder was the

consistent carrying out of Masonic principles and obligations to their legitimate results. It wasn't so much the poor man who lately deposed on his dying bed in the city of Racine, that with his own hand he pushed Morgan into the Niagara river that did it, as it was the order and institution of Masonry itself. He and his assistants were the faithful servants and true exponents of the mystic order, only they failed in the vital matter of perpetual secrecy. Most grievous unmasonic conduct that. Hence they are branded as bad Masons—"*a mob of excited Masons*," so their Masonic historian styles them, showing that, Spartan-like, the Masons do not punish for crime, but only for getting found out. Violating secrecy, or failing in it, seems to be *the* unpardonable sin with Masonry.

IV. Of the many false pretenses which I found in Masonry, I have time barely to mention a few, and not to prove and illustrate them as I could wish. 1st. They claim the most hoary antiquity, going back to the ages of myth and fable, where the memory of man runneth not to the contrary. The mayor of Chicago had the hardihood to put forth this idea at the laying of the corner-stone of their water works lately, and their spread eagle orators indulge so much in this glittering twaddle that charity would fain hope they believe it; while yet the finger index of his

tory points infallibly to 1717 as the period of the origin of *speculative* Masonry. It is not as old by a century as the Plymouth Colony, and the book of Mormon proves Mormon *antiquity* as clearly as the Masons can prove theirs. Consequently, all they say about Enoch and Solomon and John the Baptist being Masons, and their having a key to certain portions of the Bible, which none but Masons have, is found to be a cheat, and such a cheat as partakes of both hypocrisy and sacrilege, as well as fraud. 2d. They made great pretenses of being possessed of valuable mysteries of knowledge, of science and arts. But in this respect I found their archives and arcana to be as barren as Sahara. As to any valuable information, any *original* idea, historical, scientific, moral or religious, they have absolutely none. All its stores would not be a perceptible increase to the stock of knowledge in an infant class in a common school. These things may perhaps be looked upon as small or indifferent matters, but I have always supposed any false pretense clearly made out, is the brand of the impostor or the swindler. 3d. Then there is the claim par excellence of relief and charity. Here they boast themselves superior to everything that is called great or good, I had almost said in earth or heaven, and yet I found them absolutely perverting and destroy-

ing the vital idea of practical benevolence as taught by Christ. Their teachings and practice tend but to blot out the light of that heaven-born idea from the world and restore the midnight of supreme selfishness. For Paul teaches that a man may give his goods to feed the poor to any extent, and have not charity; and Christ tells us that publicans and sinners do good and lend to each other to receive as much again, and are entitled to no praise. And this is all the Masons do or teach, as Masons, and they don't do any such vast amount of that as to impoverish themselves very materially. All they bestow in the way of relief is what the receiver has bought at a fair bargain with his money, and even of such relief neither Masons nor Odd Fellows use a greater per centage of their vast incomes (and their published reports will prove it)—in such mock benevolence, than fishermen do for bait. And I am not uncharitable in saying both are done for the same purpose—*to catch gudgeons.* These orders do not exist for the sake of relief, but relief is bestowed for the sake of the orders. Talk about the benevolence of the order towards the needy! Talk of this as the *object* of the order, when no conceivable scheme which human foresight can devise is omitted to keep as many who are likely ever to want relief from the order as possible. All the

feebler sex, all the minors, all the infirm and crippled, all the enslaved, all the aged, all who are poor, and not likely to be otherwise —none are received who seem likely to come to want. And all who come in pay a stipulated premium for a right to a dividend if want should overtake them, and it may be one in fifty or a hundred claims his purchased dividend. And the payment of this with a great flourish of trumpets is called benevolence. I do not wish to undervalue any sums which these orders may pay to the needy; but I say that to call this benevolence, is false teaching. They are not benevolent institutions. In no human institution is selfishness more fully incarnated and intensified than in these very institutions. If I was ever certain of anything, I became certain that the true idea of benevolence never had a place in Freemasonry, or has utterly perished from it if it had. Benevolence is not its object. What is it? I will tell you in one word—*Favoritism*. This is not one of their secrets, it is rather one of their most effective boasts. And this I own is not wholly a vain boast. It is as truthful as Satan's offer of the whole world to Christ, and is substantially the same proposal. Nor should they regard it as an accusation from me, since themselves glory in the substance if not in the name—albeit, in so doing they glory in their shame. "Cast

in your lot with us," say they, "we will all have one purse, we'll help you to social position, to business, to office. We'll relieve your necessities, we'll aid you in your law suits. We'll beat back your enemies and extricate you from trouble. You *must* join us if you expect to do anything; you can't do anything if you don't." I don't say that these pretensions are altogether false. But I do say that if they are *true*, they ought to sink the institution into deeper damnation than if they *were false*. If a man cannot achieve the success in life he deserves, by honesty, and skill and industry, without selling himself to these secret orders, and himself paying the purchase money, it is because they conspire to prevent him, by neglect, or even by actively diverting the good which he merits from him, and conferring it upon others because they belong to their caste and clan. If the one in whose favor this diversion is made is *equally* worthy as a man, he can get on without this favoritism. If he is not as worthy, it implies injustice of very especial meanness. In either case I charge that if Masonry makes its promise of favoritism good, it is guilty of an unjust aud contemptible interference with the business of its neighbors. And he's a mighty mean man who will either justify such favoritism, or seek or accept its benefits. It is not only a

mean interference with other folk's business but it is a wicked interference with God's plan and law for the government of human society. "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?" God's impartial law of human rights enacts that, in the race and competition of life, every one shall have a fair and equal chance; and men have re-enacted it in the proverb, "Fair play is the jewel." A just weight and a just measure, and the same to every one. According to his worth, shall be thy love; according to what thou receivest shall be thy payment; according to his merit, thy meed of honor; according to his *necessities* (not his pass-word), thy charity. Man's chief end, as God appointed it, is to glorify God and do good to his fellow men impartially. Masonry's chief end is slyly to gain control of the governments and religions of the whole world, and parcel out the chief benefits of both among the fraternity; always remembering that outsiders have no rights which they are bound to respect, only in so far as they may have men's persons in admiration because of advantage. In civil matters this is the way they operate. With the slyness of a cat and the cunning of a fox they monopolize the chief offices. Having gained office by favoritism, they use it for the exercise of favoritism. The magistrate will refuse a warrant against a brother Mason;

or if the case be so clear that he dare not do that, he will get before the sheriff and inform him of "the *approaching danger*." The sheriff observing the hailing sign of distress will fail to *see* the man that made it; or witnesses will be absent from the stand, or refuse to testify to the *whole* truth; or the judge will rule out the evidence that would convict; or the juror will "espouse his cause so as to extricate him from his difficulty;" or the jailor will forget to take out his key when he locks up; or the executive will pardon—and thus justice will be frustrated. Your Jeff. Davises will go free, your Johnsons cannot be impeached, truth will be strangled in our streets, and equity cannot enter, and judgment will be turned into hemlock, and society, law and government will exist, not equally for all, but mainly for a *caste*. I do not slander Masons when I say of the leaders they are as much bent on *ruling* as ever the slaveholders were. If they were as open and bold about it, I should fear them less and respect them more than I do. But before a *secret conspiracy*, whose rights are safe, and what is our defence? It is a leopard watching the gates—it is a snake in the grass. I know they claim to have nothing to do with politics. That is only another of their false pretenses. They swear their higher Masons to promote a brother Masons' "political prefer-

ment in preference to another of equal qualifications." And this oath they intend shall be, and it is, a far-reaching instrument of political power. By it the high masons calculate to control, *nolens volens*, the political influence of the whole fraternity, and thus the nation, and make their grand commanders most puissant in fact as well as in title. And yet I believe I should let all this pass in silence, if it were not for one thing more, which I consider worse than all the things I have alleged against Masonry put together.

V. And that is its position on Religion. I am aware that Masonic authorities are not clear as to what that position is. One will tell you that it is not a religious institution at all, but if a man lives up to it he'll be about as good as the best. Another, that it is a good enough religion for him. Another, that a man cannot be a true Mason and not a true Christian; and another will not scruple to declare that it is ahead of the churches, and if he can belong to but one, it shall be the lodge. I leave it to others to tread the mazes of ambiguity and contradiction which abound in Masonic authorities, oral and written on this point—only remarking, that this very incertitude and diversity argues anything but a frank, honest and desirable position. My object is simply to testify to what I know and believe. I believe that

the great mass of Masons, by which I mean those who really in their hearts approve of Masonry, do make a religion of it. Neither have I any doubt that it is, in theory and in practice, and in God s estimate, a religion. But as such, it is a false religion, and whoever relies upon it misses the only salvation and loses his soul.

This objection to Masonry will be derided as foolishness by those who look upon all religions alike, because they have true faith in none. To them there may be Lords many and Gods many, whose being and whose religions and whose followers are entitled to the same regard and fellowship. But to us there is but one God and one Mediator, Jesus Christ; neither is there salvation in any other. This is the one grand absorbing issue between the true religion and all the other religions and philosophies of the world. "I am God," says Jehovah, "and there is none else." Hence follows with most logical consistency, "Thou shalt have no *other Gods* before me;" *i. e.*, before my face or in my sight. Next, thou shalt have no fellowship with those that have. "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? What concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" This is fundamental to Christianity. What is the fundamental principle and practice of

Free-Masonry? Just the reverse. Its theory is in perfect accord with that transcendental and pantheistic philosophy, so called, which maintains that whatever in all the world is called God is God, and by whatever codes obeyed, by whatever forms worshipped, that obedience and that worship are to be respected as true religion, and its votaries to be fellowshiped—Christian or Mahometan, Jew or Pagan, all the same. That is substantially the Masonic theory of the identity of all religions, and of all Masons worshiping the same God. Herein consists the sublimity of Masonic toleration. This is the foundation principle of Masonry, and I beg you to note that it is exactly the reverse of what we have stated as the fundamental principle of Christianity. It is not a disagreement in non-essentials, but direct antagonism of fundamental principles. What Masonry teaches on these vital points, Christianity denies; what Masonry enjoins Christianity forbids. It is right on this fundamental issue that the battle is joined, and on this line it will be fought out, if it takes the whole period of the world's continuance. The question is not whether our religion is *true*, (that is conceded in this controversy) but whether it is the *only* one that *is* true. The poor Indian says, "The Great Spirit has given a book religion to the white man; good religion for white man. He has given a dif-

ferent religion to the red man, that's best for Indian." The old Romans would have placed a statue of Christ in their pantheon, had his disciples consented to his receiving such honor. They would have worshipped him in company with Mars, and Hercules, and Minerva, Jupiter and the rest. But as this was rejected as utterly disgraceful and abhorrent by his disciples, they felt themselves justified in exterminating such an insufferably intolerant and pestilent sect. What the Romans offered, all the world would offer to-day, and the worshippers of the Grand Architect would applaud the liberality of Christians in accepting it. But they are just as exclusive and intolerant as ever, and have no thought of anything but absolute victory over all opposing religions and systems, and the complete conquest of the entire world. According to Josephus, the worshippers of Baal at Peor said to the Israelites whom they enticed to their feasts, "Seeing you have come to our country you ought to worship the Gods of the country, especially as your God is so exclusive and peculiar that he belongs to but one little nation, while *our God* is *common* to *every nation*," and the Israelites who were beguiled by this specious boasting said to Moses, "you may enjoy your narrow and tyrannical bigotry, but you shall not impose it upon us." We will be free to gather our

knowledge from all people and do that which is agreeable to our own minds. What conscious freedom! What large mindedness! What liberality was that! And is not that just about the position and the spirit of Freemasonry now? Her God is common to all people; or rather, she accepts the Gods of all people, conceding whatever favors they demand, having really no God of her own, only a certain impalpable abstraction which she imagines to be the substratum or essence of all Gods, and so may be all things to all people, and nothing in particular. But the ways of this harlot, like all others, "*are movable.*" And so among Christians, she carries the idea that the God she worships is their God, and the Bible she takes as her guide is the book of the Christian law. But in Arabia, it is the Koran; in India, the Shasters; in China, the works of Confucius; in Salt Lake, the book of Mormon. So that when she speaks of God and the Holy Bible the meaning is ambiguous, depending wholly upon the latitude and longitude, or the intent or mental reservations of the speaker.

Thus Baal of old meant God in general, without specifying any one in particular. Just the best type to represent the Masonic pantheistic abstraction. And I have come to the settled conviction that the leaven of Pagan philosophy which crept secretly into the

camp of Israel and taught the children of Jacob to swear by Baal, is at this day creeping into the churches and teaching Christians to swear by the same Deity. It is really Baal worship under a new name and with new rites. What else can it be, when the Christian and the Jew, the Mahometan and the Tartar, the Mormon and the Savage, the infidel and the Dervish meet together "on the square," profess their common trust in God and bow together in worship of God. What God do they worship? Is it the God of the Christian or of the pagan? Of the Fire worshipper or of the Devil worshipper? What God is there in all the realms of being or of fancy whom they *all can* worship except it be that same ancient abstraction which the Orientals called Baal, and the Masons call the Grand Architect? For bear in mind, Masons always claim that there is nothing anomolous or incongruous in the union of all sorts of religionists under heaven in their worship, because whoever they are or whatever they are, Mahometan, Jew or Pagan, they all worship the same God. But what God is it? Of one thing all men may be certain—our God accepts no such dubious homage. I dare apply to such a crowd the words of Paul and say we know that the things which these mystically affiliated Gentiles "sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils and not

to God." They do not worship Christ, for in the case just supposed, either they know nothing of him or they reject and despise him. And, moreover, Masons can never consistently worship Christ, since a large portion of them, *e. g.*, Arabs, Jews, Pagans and infidels, reject him, they must all refrain from worshiping him; or they cannot "all worship the same God." And not only this, but the highest Masonic authorities lay it down as a rule not to be questioned or disregarded, that '*that to offer prayer in the name of Christ*,' i. e., in Masonic assemblies, '*is contrary to the universality of Masonry*.' And that is certainly so. Masonic worship is therefore of necessity, constructed upon the principle of *deliberately ignoring* Christ. Just put a mark here and pause to settle in your mind two questions. 1st. Can a Christian, knowing this fact, join in Masonic worship or fellowship the institution without as really denying his Lord in the Masonic assembly as Peter did in the Hall of Caiaphas? 2d. Can regular Masonic worship be anything but a contemning of Christ and an insulting of his Father; for has not the Father testified of Jesus, "this is my beloved son, hear ye him?" And has not the Son said, "*No* man cometh to the Father but by me,' 'but whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name He will give it you."' And yet, here is an order

claiming to be an handmaid of religion, a landmark of Christianity, claiming to teach its members "how to adore their God, how to live, and how to die in the fond immortal hope" of heaven, and yet has enough of a whores forehead to teach, and to insist that to offer prayer in their assemblies in the name of Christ is contrary to its universality.—Thank God its universality is a dream never to be realized. It does not relieve Masonry here to say no disrespect of Christ is intended but merely to frame a pure worship of Deity, in which all may join who believe in a God; and that in doing this she is entirely impartial, treating Christian peculiarities in no other way than the necessities of the system render imperative, in no other way than she does those of all other religionists. That's just what we complain of, treating the worlds only, mediator and Savior, just as she does the abominations of the heathen; treating Jesus just as she does Juggernaut, except when her bland impartiality is upset by Christ's inexorable demand to reign sole and triumphant over all. Then comes out the spiteful "crush the wretch," showing that the remarkable absence of the very name of Jesus in all her prayers and liturgies and religious teachings is not the result of ignorance or forgetfulness, but of the necessities of a system deliberately at war with the

claims and dominion of Christ. And for Masonry still to pretend friendship to Christianity is only to carry on that war with the cowardice and treachery of a pirate when he hoists the flag of his victim. Strange that men are so slow to learn that the very nature of Christ's claims renders the least neutrality impossible. No individual nor association can touch the matter of divine worship and not be positively for Christ or positively against him. And that sublime toleration which affects the same friendship for Jesus and for Mahomet has so nearly reached the limit of abuse that to add cursing him and spitting on him would be merely an unessential accident. Nor will it help Masonry to plead that in some degrees of Knighthood she enjoins fidelity to Christ, even to fighting for his cross with carnal weapons to the death. That was the mere chivalry of the crusades, and per contra she inculcates upon the knights of the Eagle, or of the Sun, the most unblushing and bitter infidelity—"Out of the same mouth proceedeth both blessing and cursing." "The moveable ways" again. For surely the institution that inculcates such contradictory views of Christ and his religion is no true friend of either. And I repeat, Masonry is Christless and it don't disprove this to plead that her chaplains often pray extempore and pray in the Masonic assembly

just as they do in the church; for if they do this and pray to Christ or through him they act disorderly and outrage every Jewish or pagan or infidel Mason; yes, every mystical brother who regards consistency and does not like to have the fundamental principle of the body trampled upon. But every Christian praying in a Masonic assembly must commit this outrage or else he must disown his Saviour and be guilty of that presumption before God which brought down consuming fire upon Nadab and Abihu. A dilemma from which he can escape only by withdrawing from the institution. Nor does it clear Masonry of this charge of being Christless, that in some of her canonical prayers she even teaches her members to ask the Grand Architect to pardon them for his Son's sake. This at first has a Christian sound. But see again "the movable ways." While this may delude the Christian, there is no necessity of its becoming an offence to the infidel, the pagan or the Jew. For was not Saturn the son of Chronos? and Jupiter the son of Saturn? and Mercury the son of Jupiter? And was not Adam the son of God? and what God in all the world has not his son? And since the Grand Architect is neither this God nor that one, but every one or any one, or no one of all known or unknown Gods, just according to circumstances,

Masonry is in no wise compromised or committed to Jesus of Nazareth by any such prayers. After all I still affirm that in all her official prayers, in all her liturgies, in all her recorded hopes of a resurrection and of heaven she has no clear or designed recognition in his true character of Him who is the resurrection and the life, whose name is above every name, whom all heaven adores and all saints love more than words can tell.

Nor will it relieve Masonry of the charge of hostility to Christ and his religion for its friends to say, "We do not make Masonic worship a substitute for the duties or worship of the Church. If Christian duties or prayer meetings detain our members from the lodge we always accept it as a good excuse. We certainly wish them to be faithful and exemplary in all their church relations." This is the old and general policy of the seducers of God's people into any idolatrous worship. O yes, worship the Lord to be sure, but then, if you show a little respect to Malchum, too, what harm? Just occasionally—just for once—just go and see others do it, any how, it pays you know." No doubt the Tempter would have plied the Saviour with this kind of persuasion, if in quoting the commandment he had stopped with simply saying "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God." *Certainly*, by *all means*, Satan would have said,

But only just bow down this *once* and worship me, and I will give thee all the kingdoms of the world; and then honor God with your power, worship him as much as you please. But Christ did not stop there. He came down upon the tempter with an emphatic utterance of the last clause, "*and Him only* shalt thou *serve*," and that shut his mouth. Small thanks are due to Masonry for her consent, so graciously tendered her members, to worship at both altars, hers and Christ's The consent is worthless, for we ask no leave of man or angel to worship at Christ's altar. And Christ's leave to his children to worship at any other altar is peremptorily denied. "Him *only*; Him ONLY shalt thou serve."

This remarkable avoidance of the very name of the World's Redeemer is no accident, but marks a deep design of such significance as should impel every lover of Jesus to say, with prompt and unalterable purpose, the institution that has no place for my Saviour has no place for me. Its basis is naked Deism. Its worship is unchristian. The false code of honor is its moral law. In a word, when carefully analyzed, it is found to bear, in its vain pomps and boastings, in its oaths and false pretenses, in its positive Christlessness, and its deeds of favoritism and of murder, every mark which might define a

disguised institution of the Prince of darkness. The worst delusion of all is that by which unregenerated souls are led to indulge the vain hope, that through the solemn services of its beautiful ritualistic formalism and the practice of its spurious virtues of self-righteous morality and Chivalry—the filthy rags of legal righteousness, they shall reach heaven. One full draught of this sweet delusion, this circean cup, and publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before this Masonic moralist.

In vain you warn; in vain you invite. He heeds not the heavenly charmers—charming never so wisely. O, my Saviour, pity these fascinated sinners; say not of them all, "they are joined to their idols—let them alone."

The Christian who adheres to these lodges usually loses his spirituality, if he ever had any, and is lost to the church on earth if not in heaven. "He did not know that I gave him corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied his silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal." Oh how much of Christ's time and influence, and means, are squandered upon these strange delusive systems by his professed friend? Sacrificed on altars, even polluted and smoking with human blood.—"Saviour, forgive them, they know not what they do." I have spoken mostly of Freemasonry in these remarks. If it be not clear

that every Christian should abstain from all fellowship of this institution as from an unclean thing that cannot be touched without spiritual defilement, then nothing is clear. Odd fellowship I esteem but little better, indeed no better, only, perhaps, not quite so mature in badness. The secret Temperance Orders I do not accuse of the same heresy and corruption or anti-Christian guile as yet. But I must fear and believe that in their organized perpetual secrecy there lurks the same elemental mischief in embryo. It is a seed, or an egg, now, but in it is wrapped up the seminal principle of evil which one day will develop the Upas or the Serpent. Besides, they are *unintentionally*, in most instances, I hope, but none the less hurtfully for that—the tools of Freemasonry, its pioneers and armor bearers, without whose help Freemasonry could never have become again what it is at this day. They are its primary and Sunday schools; or, to borrow a comparison from their own specialty, they sustain to Freemasonry a relation like that of beer to brandy. It is useless to condemn one while you use the other. The only effectual remedy for this virulent moral intoxication of Secretism, as for intemperance is, *Total Abstinence.*

CONGRATULATORY LETTERS.

The following extracts from letters to the Convention will serve to show how it was hailed from all parts of the Northern States, and disclose a unanimity of sentiment that intimates the working of one all-prevading spirit, and that the time for a general movement has come, and God is in it:

Rev. W. W. Ames, writes from Dunn Co., Wis: "I am rejoiced that such a call as brings you together has sounded over the land. * To my mind, it 'is as the rallying trumpet of Divine Providence, summoning the children of light to an onset against the unfruitful works of darkness.' * * Christianity has nothing to cover up. It is the light of the world in the persons of the disciples and churches of Jesus Christ. They are not the children of the night nor of darkness, but the children of light, and are commanded to let their light so shine that others *seeing* their good works, may glorify their Father who is in heaven. Therefore, all societies requiring oaths of secrecy are, in my opinion, anti-christian in the nature of the case, and tend to cripple and nullify the influence of Christianity in the world, and to supplant the church of God. Hence, with regard to the duty of the churches concerning them I frankly assert that they should wisely, but firmly and persistantly, discountenance them,

not tolerating Freemasonry for an hour, and properly exposing the nature and tendency of all others as auxiliary and tributary to Freemasonry, and showing to the younger members especially a more excellent way of doing good than by joining hands with the ungodly, in secret conclave, under cover of darkness and the penalties of an oath. Hence, the church of which I am pastor (Baptist) has in its record-book a by-law refusing membership to any active Mason who shall refuse to promise that he will cease further active co-operation with the order."

Prof. John Morgan, of Oberlin, O., writes:

"The discussion respecting Masonry still goes on here, Prest. Finney preached very ably on the subject, reading copious extracts from 'Bernard's Light on Masonry,' the substantial correctness of which, with regard to the first three degrees, he *attested from his own personal knowledge.* I cannot well express the interest I feel in this subject. There are, no doubt, large numbers of good men members of the Masonic order, though to me it is a matter of astonishment that it should be so. We must look at the fact as it is, and make wise and loving efforts to rescue our brethren and the thousands of our countrymen and neighbors who are entangled in an institution, of the nature of which they are probably no more aware than slaveholders and other defenders of slavery were aware of the character of that curse of our land. We must prepare for misconstruction and bitter persecution, much of it to proceed from good but blinded men, to whom their secret society is as the apple of their eye. * * Much will depend upon the spirit with which we conduct the controversy, the *temperance* as well as the zeal in our management of the case; on our dealing little in hard words and much in hard arguments and fraternal persuasions. It seems to me that at the present time it is much

more important to *enlighten* the church and the nation on the subject of secret societies than to determine what the churches ought to do with entangled members and candidates. If the light is made strong enough, the entangled, if truly good men, will generally rescue themselves without the help of disciplinary measures, and the enlightened must manifest a spirit of patience and fraternal confidence."

Rev. Wm. Dillon, Butler Co., O., writes:

"*Dear Brethren and Friends*—

"To you I send greetings. I congratulate you upon the purpose for which the Convention is assembled, and bid you God speed in devising measures to stay the plague of secrecy. The church with which I stand connected, namely, the United Brethren in Christ, numbering 100,000 communicants, positively forbids the admission to membership any who are connected with secret societies."

The venerable Father Dodge, of Milburn, Ill., now in his 85th year, and nearly blind, but seeing clearly, sent us the following brief but weighty testimony:

"Whilst I have nothing but kind feelings toward members of secret societies, I am opposed to them, especially the Masonic, because so far as my observation has extended, their influence on the spiritual interests, both of individuals and communities, is bad. I believe they are among the obstacles that must be removed before the kingdoms of this world will all become the kingdom of Christ."

Rev. J. G. Schoaff, of Big Spring, Pa., writes:

"As a Christian minister I have been pained to see the intoxication now so prevalent in the country, on the subject of secret societies, and I have a confidence that God will yet destroy it. My opposition to these societies arises from a thorough conviction of their deistical character."

Letter from the Editor of the *American Baptist*, New York city:

"I was truly rejoiced to learn that you had called an anti-Masonic Convention in Aurora, to consider the subject of secret societies and their relation to the churches. Were it not so far I should have been glad of an opportunity to attend such a Convention, but as it is, must be content with wishing you God speed in your very difficult but very necessary effort. Freemasonry is swallowing us up. It governs in church and state. The last church in this city belonging to the denomination with which I am connected, that has resolutely stood out till this time against the admission of adhering Masons, has now thrown the gate open, and contents itself with merely placing on its records a *recommendation* to withdraw from the institution. Even this slight protest will not be allowed to remain long.

"I have sent you by mail a few numbers of our paper, in which the subject has been discussed, and hope you will receive them before your meeting. Please notice what is said about the source from which Elder Bernard obtained the higher and most obnoxious degrees. I have evidence for the facts I state, duly signed by the responsible parties, that the copy from which Bernard's degrees were taken was in Dr. Dalceo's own handwriting, and was the official document in the hands of the proper authorities of the 32d and 33d degrees. Masons are endeavoring to narrow us down to the first three degrees, pretending that the upper degrees are not real Masonry, We must not let them thus deceive us. The high degrees are the *real* ones—those for which the lower are made. The *high Masons*, and not the low ones, control the order. Anti-Masons are often led astray by buying a bogus book called "Morgan's Freemasonry Exposed," &c.—a work which is on many of the bookstands in New York,

through the influence of Masons, while not a genuine book like Bernard or Stearns is to be seen anywhere. The spurious book is made up of the three degrees which Morgan published, *given correctly*, and then four others in which the oaths are thrown out, and their places supplied by a few unmeaning affirmations; the whole character of the degrees are changed, and the whole winds up with a confession of Morgan that he never was a real Mason! Thousands buy these books, and seeing how different the degrees are from Bernard, and thinking that Morgan wrote them, give up the search in despair, supposing that Bernard, Stearns, Morgan and all are in irreconcilable contradiction.

"I hope you will call a National Convention, as suggested, and that it will be a general one, not merely religious, but taking the subject in all its bearings, and invite all real anti-Masons of whatever sect or name, to unite; and if you could form a regular society, and establish a newspaper organ, it would be of great advantage. The common religious papers cannot meet the gigantic evil if they would, and alas! too many of them would not if they could. We have contended against it in our paper, notwithstanding it has cost us thousands of subscribers and crippled us in our general missionary operations, and I trust we have done something towards checking the evil, but it is a work that cannot be accomplished by one or two religious papers. There must be a regular organization, with a special organ to meet the giant evil in an effectual manner."

It may here be stated, instead of giving the words of the several correspondents, that with entire unanimity they declare in favor of a National Convention.

The letter of Hon. Aaron White, of Rhode Island, did not arrive in season to be read in the Conven-

tion, but its testimony is too valuable to be left out.

"DEAR BROTHER—Your letter of October 28th, enclosing a letter from Dr. Blanchard of October 22d, was received by me on the 31st ult.—of course too late for an answer to reach the Aurora Convention in due season:

"In the warfare against the institution of Freemasonry, which took place in 1826 and 1832, you and I felt quite an interest. The result of that conflict was such that I thought, and still think, that the old monster Freemasonry was killed. It certainly lay motionless for a number of years. Its lodges were nearly all disbanded, their halls were sold, and their jewels and gewgaws scattered as curiosities. Their special regimentals were given in part as second-hand clothing to the Odd Fellows, while the remnants were patched into tinsel garments and used by some of our fanciful college boys.

Recently, however, attempts have been made, by a new generation, to re-enter and resuscitate the old forsaken carcass, and some are fearful that, like the Demoniac of old, the last state of Freemasonry will be worse than the first. As an old soldier in the conflict, I have felt some interest in the movement, and kept watch, and I must say that the present action of Freemasonry has no more resemblance to its former action than do the contortions of a galvanized carcass to the regular motions of natural vitality. The addition of a few more years gives to us two a great advantage over our younger friends in this matter. We remember what Freemasonry once was, when its churches were in every village and its members included a majority of the wealth and influence of community. At that time, the world without, and its votaries within the walls of the lodge, believed that the institution was possessed of certain ineffable secrets known only to the initiated, and by them seen

but dimly, whose talismanic power gave protection to the humblest Mason, similar to that afforded by the charms of the Northmen, the relics of the Catholic, the amulets of the Mahometans, and the medicine bags of our Western Indians. Under this imagination the institution of Freemasonry was certainly feared by all.

"During the searching ordeal of the Morgan excitement, Freemasonry was thoroughly analyzed. Its character, its constitution, its mysteries, its secrets, and all that it had, for good or ill, was opened to the eye of the world; and not only to the world, but Freemasons themselves had a better opportunity of seeing what Freemasonry actually was than they ever had before. At that time Rhode Island was the Mecca of Masonry. It was the seat of the beast, and on that seat it received the deadliest blows, for in Rhode Island the institution was by legislative action, subjected to legal investigation, in which the secrets and constitution of the society were brought forward by its highest officers. These officers then swore that these revealed secrets were all that they had ever known, and I believe they swore to the truth, for their testimony was published and has never been contradicted.

"Most men of the present generation have, I think, a very imperfect idea of the true character of the Morgan excitement. By most it is regarded as a temporary ebullition of popular frenzy—a kind of a crusade. This is a great mistake. William Morgan, a member of the Masonic society, published a small book in which were disclosed some of the secrets of the order, and by so doing exposed himself to certain Masonic penalties. These penalties some misguided Masons undertook to enforce, and actually did enforce, by the instrumentality of legal forms and civil process. Now, in all civil society, legal forms and civil processes are regarded as things

sacred, and this monstrous perversion of them, to effect a purpose for which they were never intended, was looked upon as a kind of sacrilege, and justly aroused the indignation of every one. The excitement ran like fire, and never stopped until the institution in whose behalf the crime had been committed, was completely overthrown. I verily believe that a large portion of the then Masonic society in our free States were as much pleased to see it fall as the rest of the world. They saw the danger of having this Morgan case as a precedent. It changed the nature of their terrible oaths. By the aid of civil process these horribly constructed scarecrows became living demons, of whom they were to become the first victims.

"The Masonic society still exists in name, and other secret societies are among us. The Masonic society has its signs, passwords and means of recognition, and so have other secret associations; but I do not see that the Masonic society, in its present condition, is entitled to more jealousy than any other secret society using the same machinery. In my opinion, all secret combinations of men have a dangerous tendency. Public opinion is one of God's great checks, restraining the evil propensities of mankind. Everything calculated to weaken this restraining power must be pernicious.

"From your affectionate brother,

"AARON WHITE."

From Rev. A. A. Phelps, Rochester, N. Y.

"*To the Anti-Secret Society Convention of Aurora, Ill.:*

"DEAR BRETHREN—I hail you as the friends of God and humanity, committed against one of the direst abominations of this or any other land. The pressure of duties incident to a change in the field of my ministerial labor, deprives me of the very great privilege of mingling personally in your ranks. I must not, however, allow so rich an opportunity to pass, without *speaking one earnest word for truth.*

"Observation, research and the philosophy of the case force me to the conclusion that *all secret societies stand in the way of the world's progress.* A *bad* institution *ought* not to be secret, because secrecy is favorable to the abuse of power and the perpetration of crime. A *good* institution *need* not be secret, because truth challenges the severest scrutiny, and all valuable knowledge is for the world. Good works grow up in the simplicity and sunlight of the Gospel; hence there is no need of curtains of concealment. Evil works instinctively incline to darkness; hence secrecy is always a ground of suspicion. Even a good cause—for instance, temperance—invalidates its claim to the confidence of honest men the very moment it sneaks away into secret chambers and attempts to fight in ambush. What is there in the nature of the case that demands such a mode of procedure? How much greater would be the triumph of temperance, if all its friends would run up their colors without disguise, and march to the contest in open day! But the strongest objection to secret temperance organizations is the fact that they form an easy stepping-stone to certain mystic orders of a still darker hue.

"What a fearful mania spreads over all the land in favor of secret societies! How strange that the order of Freemasons—the most reprehensible of all—should have recovered so fully and so soon from the terrible shock it received forty years ago, when it went reeling and staggering on the borders of a dishonored grave! Despite its horrid and barbarous oaths; despite its anti-Christian principles and revengeful spirit; despite its sacriligious ceremonies and senseless mummeries; despite its hypocritical pretensions and murderous exploits, it has grown to be one of the most popular and powerful institutions of the land. Civil laws succumb to Masonic laws. Political offices are mostly filled by devotees of the

order. High-handed crimes, under the protecting wing of the mystic brotherhood, are committed with impunity. In many sections of our country there is nothing of justice but an empty name. Masons intend to rule the nation, and already they begin to run up the streaming banners of victory.

"Would to God that the dire abomination stopped here! But, alas! it has infused its deadly virus into most of the religious organizations of the country, and threatens to drain off what little piety remains in the churches. Doctors of divinity lead the way, followed by thousands of lesser ministerial lights. Of course multitudes of the laity feel justified in following the footsteps of their religious leaders. The consequence is that the church becomes the nursery of the lodge, and Christ and Belial are practically united. In the name of God we enter our solemn protest against the unauthorized union! If worldly men *will* form such unholy alliances, for pecuniary, political or any other purpose, let Christians remember that they are a peculiar people, and must stand on the high plane of moral purity, or be shorn of their strength.

"It is time to cry aloud against this growing evil, which threatens to rule the State and ruin the church. By all means let us have a National Convention to discuss this whole subject, and send out a record of facts and arguments that shall thrill the hearts of the million! Let it be held in some central locality, that we may secure the attendance of the strongest anti-secret society men from every part of the country; and as soon as practicable, that we may loose no time in striking some effectual blows before the last opportunity for successful effort is swept before the resistless tide! May the God of truth stir all Christendom on the subject, and nerve the arm of every philanthropist to deeds of noble daring!

"Very truly yours, "A. A. PHELPS.

"Rochester, N. Y., Oct. 8, 1867."

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PRESS.

The grave questions which have called us together are not only matters of interest with us, but are equally so with thousands of honest hearts all over the civilized world. The evils to which reference is had in the deliberations and prayers of this Convention, are not only formidable, but all the more dangerous because of their universality. A matter of such general bearing should be so treated as to elicit the general sympathy and co-operation of all who regard the independence and triumph of the Redeemer's kingdom as of paramount importance. To accomplish our high design, all the available channels of information should be seized upon, all the windows thrown open that floods of light, in the form of appropriate literature, may be scattered broadcast over the land. Your Committee regard the Press as a powerful agent for the accomplishment of this result. And while we regret that we are not more fully informed as to the number of journals whose columns are open to articles bearing upon the objects of this Convention, it is with pleasure that we mention the following:

The Religious Telescope, Dayton, O.
The American Baptist, New York City.
The Church Union, New York City.
The Independent, New York City.
The American Wesleyan, Syracuse, N. Y.
The Earnest Christian, Rochester, N. Y.
The Morning Star, Dover, N. H.
The Northern Independent, Auburn, N. Y.
The Christian Press, Cincinnati, O.
The Christian Statesman, Philadelphia, Pa.

The Committee further recommend that an abstract of the proceedings of this Convention be fur-

nished to each of these periodicals, and any others the Convention may name.

C. H. UNDERWOOD,
H. T. BESSE,
W. W. RICHARDSON,
PARKER HURLESS,
Committee.

A voice has reached the President of the Convention from the Pacific Coast, asking with intense earnestness: Why does almost the whole press preserve such a total and studied silence on a subject that is so intimately connected, for weal or woe, with every interest of society, government and religion, as that of the prevalent secret orders of the day? Where are the periodicals that clamored for the free and fearless discussion of slavery? That with unsparing severity rebuked the studied silence of the Southern and border press on that question? If they continue this silence now, they must at least give some satisfactory and justifiable explanation, or else retract their former position; relinquish all the honor of their past noble record; recall all their severe criticisms and their sharp rebukes of the men and the journals which maintained a similar silence, upon questions no more important, no more pertinent, no more pressing than this subject of secret societies. Otherwise they should expect men with whom consistency is sometimes as sacred as right, to gather up all those criticisms and rebukes and hurl them back whence they came, with the emphatic utterances: "Thou art the man." "Wherein thou judgest another thou condemnest thyself, for thou that judgest doest the same things." "Behold thou hast instructed many, but now it is come upon *thee* and thou faintest, it toucheth *thee* and thou art troubled." The evil to be exposed is in your *own* community and at your *own* door, and you are found to be even as they whom you lately rebuked for their recreancy and despised for their cowardice.

PRES. BLANCHARD'S ADDRESS.

On the 24th day of June, 1717, just 150 years ago, four lodges of working Masons—all that then existed in the South of England—met at the Apple-tree tavern, Covent Garden, in the city of London, and formed the first Grand Lodge of "Free and Accepted" Masons. This was the origin of Freemasonry as it now exists, *i. e.* in the lodges of persons who are not Masons, but persons of all and no trades and professions.

There are, in history, some few traces of lodges or corporations of working Masons of an earlier date; and Masonic writers have carefully gathered and given all the historic notices there are. Mackey, in his "Lexicon of Freemasonry," (Philadelphia, 1866) collates and quotes all the standard writers on Masonry, and the information which he gives

concerning its history, before and since the Apple-tree tavern meeting in 1717, here follows:

Before that time "every lodge was independent;" Masons met when, where and in such manner as they pleased; initiated their apprentices, fellow-crafts and master-masons as they chose; their meetings were composed of such working Masons of the neighborhood as could conveniently meet; their annual gatherings were called "assemblies," and were strictly voluntary meetings of mechanics who laid brick and stone in mortar, and who met for conviviality, sociality and the interests of that particular craft.

Since the Apple tree meeting, the local lodges are affiliated, governed and taxed by Grand Lodges. They meet under rules and practice rites prescribed by higher bodies; the annual meetings are called "Grand Lodges;" they are no longer composed of individual working Masons, but of "grand officers," "masters," and wardens of lodges"; they are in no sense voluntary meetings, but meet by charter and permission of a Grand Master! But what marks the modern lodge as a totally and entirely different thing from

those which existed before the London meeting of 1717, is this: that at that time *Masonry ceased to be operative and become speculative, and the lodges have since had no more to do with building than have convents of priests!*

On this clear and substantial proof, given by Masonic authorities, rests the assertion that the Freemasonry of this and other countries had its origin at the London meeting, June 24th, 1717. At that time and place four local lodges undertook to charter, tax and govern all other lodges of Masons in the world, and they succeeded but too well in the attempt. They attempted more. Retaining the tools, symbols and names of the old lodges, in order to swell numbers and receipts, by taxing others besides masons, they turned those old lodges into something entirely and totally different from what they were before—they, in fact, dropped out the nature of the old lodges and made a new set, as different from the old as a convent is from a trades-union. They dropped stone-masonry and set up what they call a "world-wide religion"! They left stone and mortar and set up priest-craft and rites.

The words "*Free and Accepted Mason*" have a specific and definite meaning. The word "*Mason*" meant a worker in stone or brick, and this sort of mechanics were accustomed to erect and inhabit temporary lodges near the great building (cathedral or other) while employed upon it; as the Irish build shanties along our railroads. This word "lodge," was transferred to a meeting of masons, as the word "church" means the *building* or the *people*. Thirty such mechanics' guilds or lodges have met for centuries in London. They are mentioned in Rees' Cyclopedia in the order of their importance. There were twelve which had pre-eminence by their age and wealth. The stonemasons were not of this twelve, but were of an inferior guild. These "guilds" or lodges, of course, were rivals, and their rivalry led them to wish to have titled persons as chairmen; the same servile bowing to titles which *still* puts a drunken English Lord in the chair at an Exeter Hall meeting of Christians. Hence Mackey informs us that the first Grand Lodge, at the Apple-tree tavern, "*Resolved to hold the annual assembly and feast, and choose a Grand Master from themselves till*

they should have the honor of a noble brother at their head.—(Lex. 169) But English noblemen did not lay stone or brick, that is, were not masons. The lodge therefore voted to "*accept*" *them* as members, and give them the "*freedom*" of the lodge. Accepting them made them "accepted," and the freedom of the lodge made them "free." This made them "*Free*" and "*Accepted*" Masons. Thus the word "free," in Masonry, has no reference to popular liberty, but meant, and still means, "entitled to the privileges of a secret clan or lodge," and the first "accepted" masons were titled aristocrats. (See Mackey and Morris' Dictionary, art. "Accepted." Indeed, the desire of respectability, numbers and fees had led lodges of working masons to "accept" some members who were were not such, as early as 1663—Mackey, p. 16)—but the practice became general at the revival and spread of the lodges from the Covent Garden meeting of June, 1717, when, in a short time, the "accepted," or non-working Masons became the majority and took control of the funds; and the drones have ruled the bees and held the hives ever since! So a "Free and Accepted Mason" is simply

no mason at all, but a member of a system of priest-craft and mock rites, professing to fit men for Heaven—"the lodge above."

FREEMASONRY A SIMPLE DESPOTISM.

It is absolutely necessary, in order to correctly understand Freemasonry, to clearly apprehend the kind and sort of work which the four lodges, met at the Appletree tavern, performed. They first formed themselves into a Grand Lodge, and then ordained that no lodge or body of Masons could legally meet and transact their own business without getting (and of course paying for) a warrant or charter from their Grand Master! By this act the liberties of a large and industrious class of mankind (the builders in stone and brick) were seized, usurped and taken away, without color or even pretence of right. It is exactly as if four spiritual circles, four debating societies, or any other four bodies of men should get together, resolve themselves into a sovereign body, and ordain that no similar bodies of persons should meet together without submitting to and paying them a tribute! And the Grand Lodge, or central government which they formed was,

and is still, a *simple, absolute despotism!* No language can be stronger or clearer on this point than that of Dr. Mackey, who, on page 183 of his Lexicon, says:

"THE GOVERNMENT OF GRAND LODGES IS COMPLETELY DESPOTIC. WHILE A GRAND LODGE EXISTS, ITS EDICTS MUST BE RESPECTED AND OBEYED WITHOUT EXAMINATION BY ITS SUBORDINATE LODGES!" And the "Lexicon" goes on to argue that if a Grand Lodge should decree contrary to the ancient constitution, "*there is no redress* for its subordinates!" but the only way to reach the offending Grand Lodge would be by revolutionary action of other Grand Lodges against it! One can scarcely believe his own eyes while reading such abominable laws, which yet exist, and are in force and operating all around us! In the words of Grattan, "They resemble rather a judgment of God than an act of legislature!!" And what adds to the cool effrontery of this wholesale usurpation and "despotism," Dr. Mackey tells us that the four lodges which made it took good care to exempt themselves from its operation. He says:

"In compliment to the four old lodges, the

privileges which they had always possessed, were practically reserved to them. It was enacted that no law, rule or regulation, to be hereafter made or passed in Grand Lodge, should ever deprive them of such privileges," —that is, of assembling together without permission asked or tribute paid, and doing their own business in their own way. Bad men, like Louis Napoleon, and bad systems, like Jesuitism, often owe their success to their boldness and impudence; and this Masonic usurpation succeeded by like means, and *now*, *weekly*, trains thousands on thousands among us to the theory and practice of a despotism of the dark ages!

Thus it appears by the highest Masonic authority, that the four lodges at Apple-tree tavern, created a pure, unmixed despotism, and imposed it on all Masons except themselves, and on all others since drawn into it; that this despotism was and is submitted to because it is dark—as the Christian churches submitted to the Papacy; and despotic power once gained, by admitting "accepted" Masons who were not really such, they seized the funds, the tools, the symbols, nay! the order itself, and turned it into

something totally different from what it was originally designed. Never since Satan entered and subverted Eden, was a darker, cooler, more complete and more damning revolution accomplished in the ideas and institutions and against the rights of men!

WHY THEY SUBMIT TO IT.

Men never submit to despotism from the mere love of it—it is always for the sake of something which cannot be had without it. Thus for the pomp, and show, and license of Monarchy, the Hebrews, though warned by Samuel, submitted to the despotism of a king. Thus, for the inspiration of superstition, and the delirium of strange rites, all Asia and Africa to-day submit to priests. Thus, Mormons submit to the horrible reign of their prophet; and thus, for like reason, Freemasons submit to a government declared by their "Lexicon" to be "completely despotic"! Nor does the most abject superstition exclude from its dupes the shrewdness of self-interest or the cunning of legerdemain. Mormons are at once most thriving and most abject; and when once priestism and delusion have inau-

gurated a movement, the eagles will gather to its carcass. The present delegate of Utah at Washington boasts that he is "only Mormon enough to go to Congress;" and thousands of Freemasons are to-day in the lodge who have only "received the mark of the beast in their hand." In both head and heart they detest it, but they yield to its claims and practice its idolatries, as Christ *did not* Satan's, for "*the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them*;" for gain, glory or votes; or, once in the eel-pot of the lodge, though inly loathing it, the sharp points of Masonic vengeance prevent their leaving it.

WHAT IS MASONIC VENGEANCE?

If Freemasonry should not persecute, even to murder, those who thwart, expose or oppose it—when it can do so without losing more than it gains by the operation—it is the first system of spurious rites which has *not* done it since Cain killed Abel for that very cause. The power of Fremasonry, as of all false religions, is in the *rites;* these gone, all is gone. Hence every system of rites contrived as a substitute for, or rival

of the rites given by Jesus Christ, must have despotic power to protect itself. Hence, too, priestism and despotism are hand in hand the world over. Even in Christian countries the power of every church grows despotic in direct proportion to the rites and government it has added to Christ's; and Mormonism could not hold together a month if the Mormon chief was not an absolute despot.

Hitherto we have quoted Masonic authorities; we shall also quote anti-Masonic authorities—and any person would stultify himself by saying or insinuating that the seceding Masons on this floor, who are listening to this report, and who will vote upon its statements, are not to be believed. There are here to-day among us brethren who have taken the Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, Masters' and Royal Arch degrees; some were made Masons before and some since the Morgan outrage, and if these, added to the thousands of good men who have renounced the lodge and exposed its secrets, are not to be believed—if the Rev. Charles G. Finney, known on both sides the Atlantic and revered wherever known, and who has lately from

the Oberlin pulpit assured us that the Masonic degrees are correctly revealed, as far as he went in them—if, I say, such men as these cannot be relied on, then nobody can be relied on. But men who renounce error and declare the truth, ought to be, always were and always will be believed; and such are seceding Masons; such the martyrs of all ages—and the slur or insinuation that we might know more of these things by joining the lodge, only discredits his veracity and sense who makes it. What, then, by the "cloud of witnesses" from 1826 to this day, is "*Masonic vengeance?*"

The victims of its many murders are dead, and only the resurrection trumpet can bring them into court; but the *theory*, at least, of its vengeance is found in its oaths, a slight portion of which will be sufficient. In the Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft and Masters' degrees, the candidate, blindfolded, stripped to his shirt, kneeling, after being led beast-like with a rope about his neck, obligates himself to conceal the present and future proceedings of the lodge under the following among other penalties: "To have his throat cut from ear to ear;" "his tongue torn out by

the roots;" "his left breast torn open;" "the heart and vitals taken out;" "the body severed in two;" "the bowels burned to ashes;" with other like penalties, the ideas of which were taken from the Inquisition, and from torments and tortures actually inflicted in the savage and bloody wars and executions of the dark ages. If we are to hope that such more than fiendish penalties would not now be inflicted, why has such a lodge-literature been kept up?—a literature borrowed from the acts of inquisitors, and fit only for beasts and devils. There are men on this floor who are ready to testify with President Finney of Oberlin, that these horrible oaths, with their more than horrible penalties, were imposed on them in the lodges, and forty-five thousand out of a little above fifty thousand who seceded after Morgan died, were witnesses of the same. Why have such oaths been kept up through a whole century of progress and light unless for the purpose of intimidation, and to subject seceding Masons to real danger of assassination?

The late Judge Daniel H. Whitney, of Belvidere, Boone Co., Ill., published in the American Baptist, and afterwards in a pam-

phlet over his own name, that members of that lodge, while he was Worshipful Master thereof, attempted to screen a brother of the same lodge who had seduced and murdered a young girl named Ellen Slade; that an arrangement was made to assassinate him (Judge Whitney) in the lodge room, and that he verily believed that he would have been assassinated, had not an excited populace outside become aware of his danger, and would instantly have avenged his death! The whole pamphlet of Judge Whitney, published in 1852, should be reprinted and circulated for general use.

But if we suppose the same causes, to wit: light and progress, and fear of the people, which protect us from the inquisition and the stake, ordinarily secure us from these Masonic penalties, there is other vengeance, meaner than murder, if not more cruel. And the late Hon. Owen Lovejoy, in personal conversation with the writer of this report, said that Masonic lodges had been used by Masons for the destruction of political opponents, by sending to distant lodges certificates duly certifying that their victims had been expelled the lodge under infamous charges;

and that these false certificates, going on secret records in the principal lodges throughout the States, would be believed by the fraternity, who could have no means of knowing the falsehood of the paper, while the victim, not being a Mason, could not know of its existence. And Mr. Lovejoy further stated that such a paper was sent to a Chicago lodge containing malignant charges against himself, but that the paper was met and quashed by a personal friend of his who was a member of the lodge, and who informed him of the fact! Moreover, a letter lately dated from the Tremont House, in Chicago, purporting to come from a member of a lodge, states that it is no uncommon thing for wicked men who are Masons, to frame, or cause to be preferred charges against men outside whom they wish to destroy, falsely averring that they had been Masons in other jurisdictions; carry their case by false testimony, so far as to get it on record, and thus set the fraternity against them as unworthy Masons; when their victims and the public outside could never know a word of the matter. The writer says this is called "putting a black shirt on a man!" The letter

further states that "*the enemies of the secret orders in the lodges are more than legion;*" but that deterred by their dread of its facility for destroying the characters of men by such and similar methods, they either hold their peace, or even speak in praise of the order. There are, of course, multitudes of high-minded and honorable men who pass for masons, who would abhor such practices, but who pay little or no attention to the proceedings of lodges; and who, if they know of them, or suspect them, allow them to pass as evils which they cannot correct.

THE REVIVAL AND GROWTH OF MASONRY.

The new centralized organization framed in 1717, at Covent Garden, contained the three elements of success found in all false religions, viz: despotism, solemn rites and mysteries, and showy parades; and like all such false religions, it spread. The old Eleusiinian Mysteries, Mahometanism or modern Mormonism, neither of them excelled it in the accumulation of funds or in the rapidity of its march. From the Apple-tree tavern lodge, in spite of bitter feuds and sectarian quarrels, which kept up two or three

rival Grand Lodges, wrangling for the spoils, until 1813, when, "under the Duke of Sussex, they were happily united" (Mac. Lex., 171), in the short period of twenty-one years it had spread from that centre into France, Ireland, Germany, Switzerland, the United States, Saxony, Belgium, Holland, Spain, Portugal, Turkey, Asia, Africa, and among the exported convicts at Botany Bay. A few years later it had gained footing in Denmark, Sweden, Russia, Poland, Bohemia, Canada, the West India Islands and Brazil, so that now "most of all the existing Grand Lodges on earth have derived their origin, directly or indirectly, from that Apple-tree tavern lodge."—(Chase's Dig. Masonic Law, p. 15.) Nothing in modern times has equalled the spread of this dark, despotic order, unless it be the spread of Spriritualism from the "knockings" in the little village of Hydesville, near Rochester, N. Y., in 1848, which, in twenty years, boasts in its books, that its "circles" count more members than all the Christian churches in this country.

In September, 1826, William Morgan was kidnapped by Masons (See Morris' Diction-

ary of Freemasonry, art. Anti-Masonry) and murdered. The discussion of Freemasonry was taken before the people, and 1,500 lodges answered by giving up their charters! Even the Grand Lodge of Illinois, then an extreme frontier State, suspended its existence for several years, but was reorganized in 1840. After the first shock of the Morgan discussion, and a few feeble efforts to stem the tide by the lodge-men, the lodges out of the slave States everywhere went down. Robert Morris, LL. D., states that of a little more than 50,000 Masons, 45,000 seceded. Lodge meetings were held in churches by seceding Masons, and the degrees conferred in open daylight. All the lodge secrets were thus revealed, and the whole system was loathed and detested as a swindle and a cheat. But the slave-power, which then controlled the politics and the organized religion of the country, protected and preserved Freemasonry from discussion in the slave states, and Freemasonry, in turn, protected slavery until it fell by civil commotion and the proclamation of President Lincoln.

The recovery of Freemasonry from popu-

lar odium and detestation is, perhaps, without a parallel in the history of human error and folly; and it shows that the forces on which the secret orders depend to manage mind are strong and mighty. Beginning with Odd Fellowship, which, as the name indicates, was a mere piece of secret and solemn buffoonery, the spirit of idolatry, cast out by the fall of Freemasonry, seized upon several popular virtues; as temperance, patriotism, and even upon Protestantism, in the Know Nothings; and these, by educating the people, creating a thirst for sham mysteries and harlot rites, have piloted Freemasonry back into popular favor, so that Freemasonry was never so popular in this country as at this hour! Without answering one argument which condemns it (for it cannot), it has glided back into power—

"Still as the breeze and awful as the storm."

Like the brothel, which is the scriptural type and emblem of all false religions, it has crept back into our towns and villages by night and in silence. Like the brothel, too, propagating itself, not by reasons addressed to the understanding, but by lures which appeal to lusts; bitter, and haughty and

scoffing, it already presents itself, by its representatives, in public places—laying corner-stones of churches, with prayers to its unknown God; omitting the name of Christ, for whose worship the church professes to be built—it has to so vast an extent silenced press and pulpit, or subsidized them in its interest, that bold men stand silent and the timid quail before it.

Some faint idea of its rapid return to power can be had from the following facts:

In the State of Michigan the applications for Masonic initiation for the year ending January, 1864, were 2,858; in the year following, 5,075! Under the rule requiring $5 to be sent in by each applicant, along with his application, whether he be received or not, the revenue of the order, from mere applicants, in that single year, would be more than *twenty-five thousand dollars.* In our own State of Illinois, from 1840, when the Grand Lodge was reorganized, to 1866, the number of lodges has arisen to 430, with a membership of *twenty-five thousand.*—(Morris, art. Illinois.) The charge for initiating a candidate into these secrets, which are not secrets, varies from twenty up to fifty dollars

for the first three degrees. If we take the smallest sum for an average, the degree-fees of Illinois Masons, excluding other dues, can not have been less than *five millions of dollars.*

THE MONEY—WHAT BECOMES OF IT.

There are no means of knowing or even estimating the amount of money drawn by secret orders from the industrious masses, and placed in secret hands, which make no reports to the people who pay in the funds, or to the legislatures which chartered the lodges; and Masons in general are as ignorant as outsiders of the amount raised, or what becomes of the money. The lodge pays no interest on deposits, declares no dividends, publishes no defaulters. When, in the Morgan discussion, fifteen hundred lodges suspended or went down, and 45,000 out of 50,000 Masons left their lodges forever, though millions on millions had accumulated in their hands, in city blocks and other real and personal property, the mechanics and laborers who had paid in the money received nothing back; and no poor were known to suffer by the stoppage of their vaunted char-

ities! Indeed, it has been forcibly said, "These orders expend no more in proportion to what they receive, in charity, than a skillful fisherman would expend in bait."

But the history of society and what few statistics we get, show that more money can be drawn from men by means of secret societies, than by any other voluntary means whatever. And, in the absence of returns, we are left to infer, from the known tendencies of such accumulations, that, as in past years, so in the present, the gains of these orders by rents, fines, dues and degree-fees, are expended for regalia, stolen by defaulters, or squandered upon favorites; and that, in one way and another, the money they receive, constitutes a vast corruption fund for the support of idleness, luxury and vice.

RELATION TO CHRISTIANITY.

Stone-laying masonry is older than the Pyramids; as old as stone walls. And the small, independent, voluntary societies of stone-masons which appear in English history, had friendly relations to the Christian religion. But Freemasonry which dates back no farther than our grandfathers, holds no

relation to Christianity but of rivalship and substitution. There is no way for a Christian minister or church to be at peace with the lodge but to submit to it, and thus virtually become a part of it. The Covent Garden lodge did not limit its aspirations to taxing and governing the little lodges of stone-masons. It opened its doors to and "accepted" members from all trades and professions, and set deliberately at work, like all spurious religions, for the conquest of the world. Hence, like the Roman Empire, which undertook the same conquest by its arms, which this order did by its rites, it undertook to include and fuse in itself all the religions of men. And the lodge stands, since the Covent Garden meeting, a sort of spiritual pantheon of the nations.

On a point so important, let us hear the Masonic authorities themselves:

Mackey says: "The religion of Masonry is pure theism, on which its different members engraft their own peculiar opinions, *but they are not permitted to introduce them into the lodge*."—(Lex., art. Religion, p. 402.) This is explicit. The worship of the lodge excludes Christ.

Chase (Digest of Masonic Laws 1864, p. 206,) says: "To require that a candidate profess his belief in '*the divine authenticity of the Bible*' or '*a state of future rewards and punishments*,' is a serious innovation in the very body of Masonry."

Again, same book and page: "It is Anti-Masonic to require any religious test, other than the candidate should believe in a God, the Creator and Governor of the Universe." Again, page 208, same work: "Freemasonry calls no man to account for his belief of any religion on the globe."—*Constitution Grand Orient, France.*

These quotations might be indefinitely multiplied, showing that the intent and meaning of the lodge was to construct religious rites and worship, which should do precisely what Satan proffered to do for Christ, viz: Unite "all the kingdoms of the world" in one religion.

Now, it needs no words to show that the religions of the world are not the religion of Christ, but Anti-Christ. The lodge is, therefore, Anti-Christ, by the definition of its own authorities. Hence, Dr. O. H. Tiffany, at the laying of the corner-stone of

Douglas' monument by Andrew Johnson, at Chicago, read a prayer which he had written for the occasion, in which no name or attribute of Christ occurred! The same professed Christian minister officiated at the laying of the corner-stone of the M. E. Church, at Kankakee, Ill., without once uttering the name of Christ. It would have been un-Masonic to do so. For why should Jews, Mohammetans, Pagans and deists be asked to recognize Christ in the prayers of the lodge, to which vast numbers of them belong? Thus the lodge is, by constitution, by definition, by nature and by necessity a Christ-excluding or Anti-Christian religion.

It is a religion; *and it is nothing else.* Its "work" consists of religious ceremonies. It has no more to do with building or stone-masonry, from which it sprung, than a squad of Monks or Mormons, or a phalanx of Spiritualists. Its candidate begins at the door of the lodge, outside, uttering a Jew's or deist's religious confession of faith. Inside the lodge, all is professedly religious ceremony. He kneels at an altar; binds himself by oaths; Christless prayers are said over him; he enters a religious covenant; he is called

a "brother," living and dead, and is buried as a brother; and the liturgy of the lodge lands him in heaven, "the lodge above." The motto on the seal of our Grand Lodge of Illinois, "Faith, Hope and Charity" is a religion condensed; and he who, in the face of these facts, can deny that Freemasonry is an anti-Christian or Christ-excluding, Gentile religion, is either deceived, or else ignorantly, wilfully, or judicially blind!

OBJECTIONS.

But the Entered Apprentice is told at the threshold that the obligation he is to assume is not to infringe his "religion or his politics." Yes, but the very prayer which is said over him while on his knees, and in which he is expected to join, is a Christless prayer.—See the New Masonic Trestleboard, p. 22.

"But the name of Christ is sometimes used in prayers offered in the lodge." True, but these are un-Masonic prayers, used to deceive Christians, and when Jews and deists are not present to object.

"But the higher and templar degrees abound in allusions to Christ." True, again;

but these are properly no part of "Universal Masonry." (See Morris' Dictionary, art. Blue Lodge.) They are side-degrees, like those invented for women; "denominational excrecences" which Masonry will "shake off."—*Id. p.* 30.

But the "Holy Scriptures" are one of the "lights" of Freemasonry, "carried in processions," etc., etc. This is also true. But "Holy Scriptures," in lodge language, mean, "in Christian countries, the Bible; in other countries, those books supposed to contain a revelation of the divine will." Arabs are Masons. Have Arabs the Bible? In a few instances, too, Christian Masons have carried votes in some Grand Lodges to recognize the Christian Scriptures. But all such votes have been promptly condemned by other Grand Lodges, as against the ancient constitutions, in words like the following, found in Chase's Digest, p. 208: "*Masonry has nothing whatever to do with the Bible. It is not founded on the Bible. If it was, it would not be Masonry, it would be something else.*" This is not only Masonic authority, but simple truth. The system was devised with the intent and purpose to include what is com-

mon to the religions of the earth, and to *ex*clude what is peculiar to them; and Christ is not included in the various religions of this earth, and therefore he is *ex*cluded by Freemasonry—which is thus proved to be one of the "many Anti-Christs" now in the world.—1 John, 2: 18.

SUBVERTS THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

But the Christian religion is found in Christian churches; and, as in theory the lodge excludes Christ, so in practice and in fact, it subverts the churches which worship and obey him. The proof of this is manifest—thus.

1. Masonry, along with other secret orders to which it has given birth, divides up the members of a Christian church into several distinct "brotherhoods," "so that the word "brother" in such a church, has either none or an uncertain meaning; thus a minister stands in a pulpit before a church made up of members of the secret orders, himself belonging to several. Before him are say, ten Freemasons, half of them Christians, the other half skeptics,or nothing; another set, "Odd Fellows" another, "Good Templars," or

"Grand Army;" another set, "Sons;" etc., etc., and all "brothers." Now let him address this motley group of rival and conflicting "*brother*-hoods," all sacred and holy, "*My dearly beloved* BRETHREN—It doth not yet appear,"etc., etc. Who under the whole heavens can tell whether he means "brother Christian," "brother Mason," or what brothers" he does mean!? These orders empty and eviscerate the very word brother of all its meaning and import.

2. These orders divide up a church of Christ (which is his body) into separate squads, each pledged to secrecy from the other, and so kill and destroy *Christian* fellowship in that church.

3. They thus destroy the unity of the "body of Christ," by these sheet-iron partitions of secrecy, so that his blood cannot flow freely to his members.

4. In their oaths and obligations they do not swear in the name of Christ, and so exclude and set him aside as the author of moral and religious obligation.

5. They occupy the time and social feelings of the Christians who join them, leaving

neither time nor disposition for the social meetings of the church.

6. No man can give his chief allegiance to both church and lodge at once. "He will cleave to the one and forsake the other, or hold to the one and despise the other."

7. When Christians, who belong to lodges, retain any traces of Christianity, they are despised and condemned by Masons. A Masonic writer, [Mystic Star, May, 1867, p. 136,] says: "These men of sectarian bias are the bad material, the soft, cross-grained, crumbling, shaky, cracked, unmanageable candidates with whom we have the most trouble." He specifies "Presbyterians," "Quakers" and "Baptists," as such "bad material"! Being thus suspected, they must lose their lodge-influence or go with it against the church.

8. There is something in the lodge-rites which destroys all relish in those who practice them for the rites appointed by Christ.

9. Judge Whitney [Pamphlet, p. 22,] says that a high Mason and worthy man remarked to him, about the time of Ellen Slade's murder, that "A Masonic lodge is the strangest medley of priests and murderers,

deacons and whoremasters, church members and gamblers, decent men and loafers, drunkards and rowdies, that THE ALL-SEEING EYE looks down upon." So promiscuous a body must, of course, collide with a neighboring church upon questions of Christian doctrine and public morals; and in every such collision, church members who are Masons, must be proscribed by the lodge, or take part with it against the church. In either case the church is weakened.

10. Prayer, baptism and the cummunion supper are rites appointed by Christ, as channels through which God's grace and presence come to men. All Masonic, and other man-made religious rites, by drawing people from these roads to Christ, in a hunter's phrase, "put men upon a false scent," and so cheat them out of their approaches to God.

11. A neighboring lodge has power to intimidate and corrupt the ministry, by agreeing in secret to withdraw their patronage, and drive him from his pulpit, unless he will bow the knee to their dark idolatries; and thus compel the church to receive a pastor chosen secretly in the lodge, and so, virtually take possession of the church, and adul-

terate and slowly change the gospel preached from its pulpit into "another gospel which is not another."

We conclude, therefore, that Freemasonry is hostile to, and subversive of the Christian religion, and that the two cannot permanently continue side by side in the same country. And that the duty of Christians in these lodges is given in the Word of God: "*Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her plagues!*"

SERMON ON SECRET SOCIETIES

BY PROF. CHAS. G. FINNEY,

OF OBERLIN COLLEGE.

PREACHED IN THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, OCT. 6, 1867.

Prove all things: hold fast that which is good. 1 Thess. 5. 21.

But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not: and shall utterly perish in their own corruption. 2 Pet. 2. 12.

And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Eph. 5. 11.

I wish so to present the subject of secret, oath-bound, permanent societies, and their relation to church and state, that our church can act intelligently on the question of receiving Masons who apply for membership, and also on the question, "Shall Christians accept and fellowship Masonry, as a co-laborer for Christ?"

It is known that William Morgan, then of Batavia, N. Y., was abducted and murdered, Sept. 1826. I was at the time, in the vicinity, a young lawyer. I had been a Master-Mason, induced to join the lodge by an uncle of mine who was a professing Christian, but, on my conversion to Christ, my moral

nature loathed and rejected it. I went to the lodge and demanded my discharge, but said nothing about it.

In the cases arising out of the abduction of Morgan, and Miller, his publisher, the courts found themselves helpless. This awakened universal enquiry, and the real nature and tendencies of Freemasonry were examined by its members, and by outsiders, and multitudes renounced it. Several others published it, and conventions of those who renounced it confirmed the truthfullness of those publications. The newspaper press was generally recreant, and two spurious editions of Morgan's book were published, to deceive both Masons and the public. But new papers everywhere sprung up, which published the facts.

Freemasons at first, everywhere denied that the truth of Masonry was revealed, but ministers and Christians, finding they could not live under such denial, at length owned the truth. All now felt at liberty to do so, since their Masonic obligations only bound them to conceal the secrets of Masonry, and now there were no secrets, since they were revealed. All seceders who renounced it, testified that Morgan and others had truly

published Masonry, while remaining adherents generally evaded or denied it; but such were the effects of the revelation that nearly all lodges suspended.

But now, a new generation, with new questions have arisen up: most of the books and publications have been destroyed; our youth have been drawn into it, and it has spread rapidly. The first settlers of Oberlin rejected it, with all secret societies, but now it is forced upon us, and our churches, by applicants for membership. We must meet it.

The first grand question is, "*What is Freemasonry? and how shall we know what it is?*"

Surely not by the laudatory writings of Freemasons, for they are under oaths, which they acknowledge to be binding, not to reveal it! Nor from the testimony of adhering masons, for, considering their oaths binding, they, of course, cannot, directly or indirectly, acknowledge that its secrets have been revealed by Morgan, Bernard and others. If asked whether those books are true, they are under oath to evade or deny it. They are sworn, under the most horrible penalites, to conceal their secrets, and, of course, will, if

possible, make the uninitiated believe that the books professing to reveal those secrets are false! Therefore, neither the affirmations nor denials of adhering Masons are to be credited, for if they regard their oaths as of greater obligation than their mere assertions, THEY WILL, OF COURSE, LIE TO SAVE THEIR OATHS! *They are sworn to conceal their secrets, but they are not sworn not to lie!* And it is notorious that many do deny that the secrets of Masonry have been published, and the most consciencious among them will say nothing about it; while thousands of seceding Masons affirmed that Bernard and others have published Masonry as it is. And it is well known that the Legislature of Rhode Island compelled Freemasons who still adhered to confess that the first ten degrees were truly published. This was as far as any one of them had gone. In this state of facts, it is madness to credit the testimony, pro or con, of those who are under oath to deceive in regard to the question before us.

It is vain to say that they are good men and will not lie:—because their adhering places them in circumstances that compel them either to violate their oath and own up,

or lie to save their oath, and deny what all seceding Masons know and affirm to be the truth. They must, therefore, renounce their unlawful oaths, and confess that the secrets are published, or, by adhering to their oaths, commit themselves to a perpetual lie!

How then, directly, shall we know what Masonry is?

I answer: *By the testimony of renouncing Masons.* This is the only testimony the nature of the case admits, and it is the only *possible* testimony, for they only can and *will* speak from personal knowledge; and because they speak from personal knowledge they are competent witnesses.

Then also, they are CREDIBLE witnesses, because they give the best of reasons for renouncing Masonry and giving their testimony respecting it. In testifying, too, they accuse themselves and confess their wrong. Their testimony is wrung from them by a sense of duty. In leaving the lodge, they testify in the face of certain and relentless persecution, at the hazard of their worldly interests, and (as in the case of Morgan and others) at the hazard of their lives! And all this without the promise or expectation of

any earthly reward; so that the first body of seceders especially, could have had no selfish motive to influence them. And, as they are all substantially agreed in their testimony, according to all rules of evidence, they are the best possible witnesses.

And while thus worthy of belief on their own account, WE WHO ARE OR HAVE BEEN OF THE FRATERNITY, *know, of our own knowledge* that the revealers of Masonry testify the truth. Their name is legion, and their testimony found in the books and records of conventions, etc., etc., of seceding Masons.

II. *By what rule shall we judge Masonry.*

Not by the *lives* of its members, for they may be worse or better than their principles. Neither Freemasonry nor Christianity is responsible for what it *consistently* condemns. But both are to be judged by what they require and justify in their members. They are also to be judged by their tendencies and natural results; by their oaths; their ceremonies; by the law of God, and the Gospel of Christ; by which we must all be judged.

(Here Prof. Finney introduced Prof. Morgan, who read from Bernard for some hours; showing Freemasonry to be a Secret Mutual

aid-Society, bound by horrible and disgusting oaths and imprecations; binding Freemasons to stand by and aid each other; in the Master's oath, "*Murder and treason only excepted;*" that is, in all crimes short of those two. In the Royal Arch degree; "*To deliver a brother* 'RIGHT OR WRONG;" thus he read on through some thirteen degrees of ceremonies, each upper degree being sworn to concealment from all below; each degree containing a lecture made up of legends and ceremonies, pretending to be solemn, yet often frivolous, sometimes ridiculous, blasphemous and absurd, interspersed with prayers to the "Architect of the Universe." (See Bernard passim.) Mr Finney then continued:

I have endeavored to select, for reading, what would present the best side of Freemasonry, leaving out the frivolus and ridiculous as far as I could, and,

III. In view of this testimony let us see

Why good men have joined the lodge?

Some have been influenced by curiosity. Then, Masons have strongly recommended it to *good* men. They have sought the good name and influence of the wise and good.

And good men too have joined with the hope of greater usefulness.

IV. *But why, finding what it was, have they not renounced it?*

Some, because they have respected the oaths. Others who have regarded the oaths as nugatory and immoral, and therefore not binding; have been influenced by the fact that it, inconsistently, pledges its members to good morals, and therefore, in moral and religious communities, acts as a restraint upon conscientious impenitent men. Then it often protects female relatives from Masons who are libertines. It also often secures help to Masons, their widows and orphans in distress. They can point to many cases of that kind. Then some good men think it useful to the impenitent, keeping them out of worse places at night.

Good men therefore have remained in the lodge for their own interest and that of their families. They have a pecuniary interest in it as a mutual insurance. It inculcates love of the brotherhood. Then they are sworn not to injure or speak ill of it. Some of the Templar degrees commend fidelity to Christianity. Then they have seen and known only

the best side of Masonry. They are not versed in its true history and have never well considered the whole question. Some having become committed, have become uncandid. Under all this terrible pressure of motive, they accept the false pretentions and pretences of Masonry and so remain in the lodge.

Then they fear persecution which Masons are sworn to inflict, and so have not the moral courage to renounce. Yet very few good men continue to attend the lodges but content themselves with letting it alone; so that few of them realy know much about it, thus leaving its immense revenues and fearful influence to be wielded by the worldly, infidel, libertine and profane.

Then good men sophisticate themselves as the slave-holders did; and are misled by eulogistic books, as *Salem Towne*, and others; who justify and laud the lodge as many others did slavery, influenced by the names of the great and good who have been involved in it.

V. *Let us now enquire why so many wise and good men do renounce and denounce it!*

They do not regard the oaths as binding

because they were obtained by fraud; unlawfully *administered*, and improperly and unlawfully taken. They see, too, that the rites, oaths included, are shockingly profane, because they pledged them to perform unlawful deeds, and so, being immoral, are, of course, void. And then, there are now positively no secrets to keep, and so the oath to keep the secrets is void by circumstances.

They denounce it because, guarded by most unchristian and monstrous penalties, which Masons *are sworn to execute*, and to be revenged in the most barbarous manner on seceders; all which is expressly forbidden by Christ and by the moral law.

Then there were no important secrets to justify all this—least of all to justify such horrible penalties. They renounce, too, because the ceremonies are shockingly profane—putting a man behind the semblance of a burning bush to personate the Infinite God! Their use of the Sacred Scriptures is equally profane; placing them also on a level with false revelations. Their offices and titles are Anti-Christian, Anti-republican and impious. So their rules of proceeding are despotic and Anti-republican. Their oaths justify that

which was done to *William Morgan*. Their members, too, by their silence or in words, justify it. Its claims to great antiquity are a sham. Its end is selfish; its morality un-Christian, and itself a religious delusion—promising Heaven as the reward of faithfulness to the Masonic fraternity!

It does not teach the necessity of a change of heart, and, by clear inference, denies such necessity. It does not purpose or profess to change the heart, and so, of course, cannot make men any better. It is clear it can never make a good man, so that if Masons are good men, it is the Gospel, and not Masonry that makes them so. Consequently it can never fit men for Heaven, and yet it falsely and impiously professes to get them there! Its professed benefactions are not benevolence, but only mutual insurance; and that not voluntary mutual insurance, but oath-bound! *These are* some of the reasons why multitudes of wise and good men renounce and denounce the lodge.

VI. *Freemasonry has no right to oath-bound secrecy.*

If it is a good, why refuse to confer it on the vast majority of mankind, women, mi-

nors, the crippled, disabled and poor? If evil, it surely has no right to secrecy. Married men have felt it to be a wrong done to their wives, and wives have been stung with the personal dishonor of a life-long concealment from them, enforced upon their husbands by a strange, promiscuous body of men.

Christians have renounced it because it grieved God's spirit in them, and many who have not renounced it, have yet *quit* it for that reason. They have renounced it because they understand and know it better since its crimes have forced investigation, and broke the dark, sepulchral silence in which it spread. They have renounced it too, because they have regarded it as a disgrace to Christ, and as a grief to their brethren. Christians, too, have left it because they saw it was a stumbling block to young masons, and because their remaining in it was commending it to young men who were not Masons, and so make the church responsible for it, and justifying it generally by their membership.

Then they have quit it because they *dare* not remain in it;—dare not remain in such

bondage;—dare not connive at the hypocrisy practiced by the lodge-adherents in denying that it has been published;—dare not belong to a voluntary organization whose oaths, and many of whose members, justify and require the murder of the revealer of its secrets! Dare not belong to a society whose oaths require the most horrid murder of any one who "violates any part of their obligations." For example, "if he wrong a Mason out of the smallest sum of money," or "speak ill of the lodge!" He is sworn not to "fail in any respect." If he does he is liable to the penalties. Christians feel bound not to keep, but publicly to confess and renounce such oaths as sins.

Then, upon careful reflection, they see that their silence and adherence makes them morally responsible for the murder of Morgan, as accessories after the fact, and so blood-guiltiness is on them till they renounce.

Then secret, oath-bound societies naturally in the hands of sinners, are dangerous. Such were the Knights of the Golden Circle, which organized our most terrible rebellion. Reliable authorities charge secret societies with being the prolific parent of bloody rev-

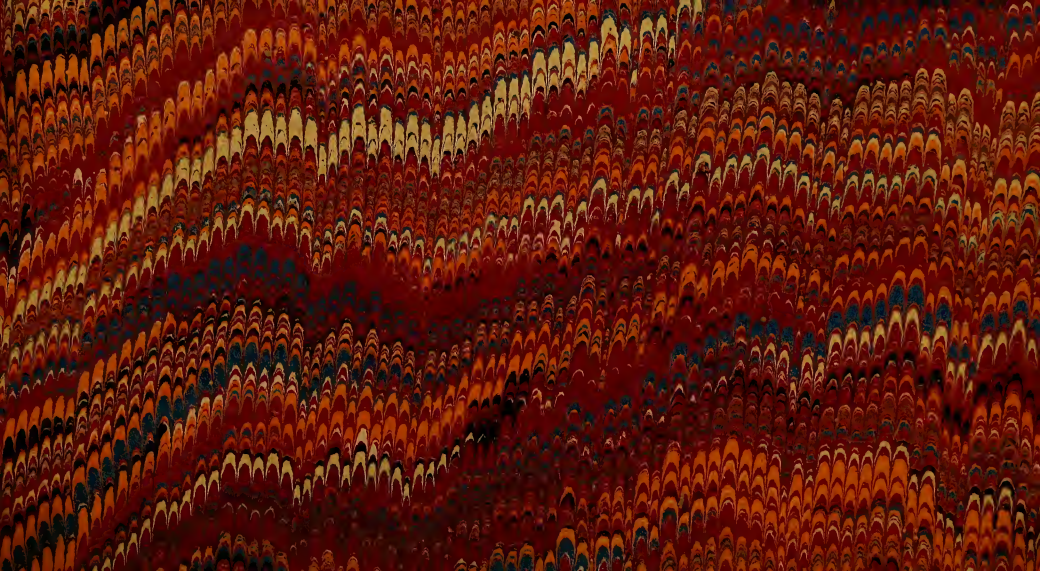
olutions in France, and particularly in Mexico (whose population divided about equally between the York and the Scotch rites, and kept between them in almost one continuous revolution.) In view of which it is seen to be no honor, but a disgrace to belong to any secret society.

VII. *Finally: Freemasonry is hostile to Christianity.*

If fellowshipped, its oath-bound secrecy would *disgrace* Christianity. Its oaths and penalties are abhorrent to it. Its mock benevolence is rejected by Christianity. Its pompous offices, titles and ceremonies are an offence, and its blasphemous perversion and abuse of the Christian Scriptures, Christianity must regard as abominable, and its (harlot) pretensions to be the "handmaid" of Christianity as absurd.

Where are its trophies? What has it done, with its vast funds, for general education, for Christian missions, revivals of religion, for the Freedmen or the general poor? To ask these questions is to answer them.

It is everywhere and evermore a hindrance to revival effort, a snare to adhering church-members, and has been the stumbling-block and ruin of many



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